

Trust and/ or control? Reorganization of the relations between North and South Korea

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Hans-Joachim Schmidt

Confidence and/or Control?

**Seeking a new relationship between
North and South Korea**

PRIF Reports No. 62



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Summary

The final curtain has not yet fallen on the East-West conflict in the Korean peninsula. The heavily armed forces of North and South Korea are still at a stand-off, with almost two million soldiers, supported by 37,000 US troops on the South Korean side. Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, which led to the partition of Korea, both countries find themselves technically still at war. So far, there has merely been a cease-fire in force.

While South Korea has since developed into a stable democracy and one of the most economically advanced nations in Asia, the Stalinist rule in the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) is threatening to disintegrate. The economic situation there deteriorated drastically during the 1990s due to economic mismanagement and a number of natural disasters. Despite this worsening economic plight, North Korea possesses the world's fifth largest army, with almost 1.2 million soldiers, and spends 25-33 % of its GNP on military defence (South Korea spends approx. 3 %).

This fuels the fear that the Communist regime in the DPRK could very soon collapse. Given the degree to which both sides are heavily armed and the conflicting structures of their social systems, the danger inherent in this is that such a process of transformation could provoke military conflict. In response to this, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung launched his Sunshine Policy in 1998 inspired by the European policy of détente. For one thing he is seeking to support the forces for economic reform in Pyongyang with economic aid and reduce the cost of reunifying Korea. For another he is trying to set in motion a process of military confidence building and arms control, so as to create a more stable framework in terms of security policy for the forthcoming transition period. It should make it easier to relieve military tensions and reinforce war prevention. This policy was consistently supported by the US government under President Clinton.

In parallel to North Korean-American rapprochement in limiting long-range missiles, great progress was made in 2000 when North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and Kim Dae-jung met for the first time in Pyongyang, followed shortly afterwards by a meeting of both defence ministers in South Korea. The first family reunions since the war were arranged, economic and food aid was increased and plans were made to reopen a cross-border road and rail link. The beginning of bilateral military confidence building was also agreed on a general level.

However, this process came to a standstill when US President Bush entered the White House. He was not willing to take over the results of negotiations to date under the Clinton government and ordered a thorough review of the North Korea policy. In spite of the new "comprehensive approach" announced in summer 2001 there is still no consensus in the American administration between the powers in the State Department, National Security Council and Democratic Party willing to engage in dialogue on the one side, and the conservative unilateralists in the Department of Defense, the White House, National Security Council, State Department's Arms Control Agency and the Republican Party on

the other. The term “axis of evil” used by Bush in his State of the Union Address on 29 January 2002 to describe the three countries Iraq, Iran and North Korea once again illustrated this vividly. The hard-liners were more interested in a confrontation with North Korea, so as to justify their armament measures and in particular their missile defence programme, as well as unilaterally terminate the ABM Treaty, rather than in a dialogue. They have to date blocked any further progress in the South Korean policy of détente.

Against this backdrop this report investigates two key issues. On the political level, clarification is needed of how the conservative unilateralists in the United States will allow themselves to become involved in a dialogue-based approach and whether Pyongyang will then be prepared to accept this approach to negotiation, or whether a prolonged period of confrontation is set to break out. On the level of arms control policy the report examines the tools with which the process of military confidence building can be initiated in spite of the existing military differences and the prevailing level of deep mistrust.

On the political level, after US President Bush’s trip to Asia in mid February 2002, in which the American president invited North Korea to engage in dialogue at the highest level and asked China for its support, and especially after the visit of Kim Dae-jung’s personal foreign policy adviser to Pyongyang in April, the dialogue-based approach finally appears to be going ahead. At the end of April 2002 Pyongyang declared itself willing to reopen dialogue.

Care is called for, however, as Bush at the same time expressed his continuing scepticism with regard to the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il and his criticism of North Korea’s system of rule during his visit to Asia. In so doing, the credibility of his offer of dialogue was cast into doubt for the time being. Nonetheless the new US government and the South Korean president have agreed on initial topics (nuclear weapons of mass destruction and missiles) for discussion with Pyongyang. Differences in opinion persist with regard to many details however.

With the agreement over initial joint topics Kim Dae-jung had begun to involve American unilateralists in the dialogue-based approach, and had bought North Korea a way out of the “axis of evil”. The North Korean willingness to engage in dialogue forced the hard-liners and supporters of dialogue in Washington finally to come to an agreement about a joint but obviously still very contentious “flexible” strategy for dialogue.

Kim Dae-jung remains in office only until February 2003, and Washington already appears to be waiting for this change in president. The conservative Grand National Party opposition leader, Lee Hoi-chang, currently has the greatest prospects, beside Roh Moo-hyun of the Millennium Democratic Party, of winning the presidential elections. He is much closer to the opinions in the Bush government than the present holder of this office, and it should be easier to reach an agreement over the details of a future offer of talks to North Korea with him. Significant progress seems unlikely until then.

Since that may substantially increase the costs of cooperation for the DPRK, the North Korean government is attempting on the one hand to intensify its contacts with conservative forces in South Korea. On the other, it is trying at the same time to back the

election of the presidential candidate Roh Moo-hyun, who supports the continuation of the Sunshine Policy, by re-entering into the inter-Korean dialogue.

It continues to remain open whether the political leadership there will for its part wait for the outcome of the next presidential elections in the USA at the end of 2004. Notwithstanding, the future of the North Korean moratorium on missile testing is to be decided in 2003, and closely linked to this the hesitations that have meanwhile crept in over the construction of two light-water reactors in North Korea are to be newly regulated at KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation). The outcome of the mid-term elections to the US Congress due to take place at the end of this year as well as the continued action by the US government against Iraq and Iran will have a lasting effect on North Korean foreign policy.

As far as the European Union is concerned during this transition period, the important thing is to continue to offer sustained support to the forces in the US government willing to engage in dialogue and the détente politicians in Seoul, to help the dialogue make a political break-through. The EU is helped in this by the fact that Japan, China, Russia and many other countries in North-east Asia are likewise backing the dialogue-based approach. The European Commission has already successfully encouraged Pyongyang to exercise restraint in the past and therefore strengthened the pragmatics in Washington and the position of the détente politicians in Seoul. Support for economic reformers in North Korea may furthermore improve the internal political requirements there for cooperation with western countries. At the same time Europe should lend its support in Pyongyang to the fact that within the framework of humanitarian dialogue Kim Jong-il is drawing closer to the South Korean détente politicians, especially on the issue of family reunions so important to domestic policy.

It must however gently be made clear to the North Korean government that a return to the Clinton government's policy is a pipe-dream. Pyongyang will pay a higher price for reopening the dialogue with Washington. This will be especially true if Bush is elected for a second term in office at the end of 2004. Brussels can make it easier to accept dialogue by offering additional economic incentives. Since China and Russia also harbour considerable interest in economic reforms in the DPRK, it would remain to be seen whether the EU cooperates better with these countries and comes to an arrangement. The rail links through North Korea backed by Beijing and Moscow also suit European trade interests at the end of the day. Japan should likewise take part in this dialogue on economic policy.

Germany, which maintains good relations with North and South Korea, is able to lend its permanent support to an improvement in relations since it opened diplomatic relations with Pyongyang in March last year. Both Koreas are not only pursuing economic interests but also aim to learn from the reunification of Germany, even if their motivation is different. Unlike Washington, Berlin has no power ambitions in Korea and can therefore much more credibly offer its services to both sides. The bilateral process of passing on information about military confidence building with North and South Korea that has been set in motion in the interim should definitely be continued. It offers the chance of a trilateral discussion process, or can at least offer it background support. Unlike large

sections of the Bush administration, German foreign policy backs cooperation and not confrontation.

Military confidence building and arms control measures will get another chance only once a stable and permanent dialogue has been reopened between the USA and North Korea. On the level of arms control a plea will be made first of all for confidence and security building measures (CSBMs), as these can be implemented independently of differences in social systems, military doctrines and military capacities, observing the principle of reciprocity. Transparency will constitute the main problem here for North Korea because of their system. To make it easier for the forces in the DPRK to accept transparency, reciprocal and voluntary measures will be approved initially for exchanging information, announcing manoeuvres, inviting observers to manoeuvres and setting up an operational hotline between both defence ministries. The USA should participate in this from the outset. For this reason Pyongyang will have to acknowledge the presence of American forces in South Korea in some way, otherwise they will not be able to be integrated into the CSBMs. The interest of the North Korean army in confidence building measures may grow, as the military superiority of the USA continues to increase.

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1. Introduction

Almost 50 years on from the Korean War, which led to the division between North and South Korea, the first summit meeting between the two Korean presidents was held in Pyongyang in June 2000. The meeting fuelled the hope that this could be the beginning of a process of détente, military confidence building and reconciliation. After all, the state of war between the North and the South is not yet at an end, as merely a cease-fire has been in force since 1953.

The Korean peninsula is one of the last regions not yet to have benefited decisively from the global détente at the end of the East-West conflict. Nearly two million heavily armed soldiers are still at a stand-off there. North Korea is the last Communist-ruled country not to have shared in the overall prosperous development in Asia. On the contrary, due to economic mismanagement and also thanks to a number of natural disasters its economic situation has deteriorated drastically since 1990. Between 1990 and 1998 gross national product fell by 55% to about twelve billion US dollars and foreign debts grew to about the same amount.¹ Many civil factories closed or had to cut their production to 20% or less. At the same time, the government was no longer able to provide its people with adequate food. It is estimated that in the 1990s between at least several hundred thousand up to three million North Koreans died of starvation (out of about 22 million). Since 1995 the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) has therefore received international food aid to the value of more than 1.6 billion US dollars.

The decline evident in North Korea leads many observers to fear that the regime will collapse.² This would result in a very costly "absorption" by South Korea which would be difficult to control. Even if the North manages to reform itself successfully in the long term, it is highly likely that under pressure from its disadvantaged people it will unite with South Korea because it is so economically backward. If North Korea were to assert its autonomy, it would still have to reorganize its security policy relations with South Korea in order to make lasting and calculable political and economic relations possible.

Since both sides are heavily armed and have mutually exclusive systems of government, this transformation process with its inherent instabilities, however it ultimately develops on the peninsula, may very quickly lead to renewed military conflict. Military confidence building and arms control are therefore important tools for creating a stabilizing framework during the transition period, which will relieve the mutual easing of military tensions, prevent a war, or limit the damage should war break out. At the same

1 See Ministry of National Defense ROK (Pub.), 2001 Defense Data & Statistics, Seoul December 2001, p 10. Likewise: Statement of General Thomas A. Schwartz, Commander in Chief United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command and Commander, United States Forces Korea before the House Appropriations Committee – Defense Subcommittee, 8 March 2001, p. 8, at: www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/lrs/docs/test01-03-08Schwartz.rtf.

2 Cf. Robert Dujarric, North Korea: Risks and Rewards of Engagement, in: Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 54, No. 2, Spring 2002, p. 465.

time willingness to engage in dialogue symbolizes interest in carrying out this transformation process peacefully.

However, after initial success in 2000 this process came to a standstill when US President Bush took up office. In the USA the conservative unilateralists in the Department of Defense, the National Security Council and the US Congress on the one hand, and those forces in the State Department and Democratic Party who are willing to engage in dialogue are unable to agree on future North Korean policy. The hard-liners are more interested in a confrontational course with regard to Pyongyang, with the aim of justifying their arms programme and especially antimissile defence, and have until now successfully blocked talks with North Korea from being reopened. In the same way, they have prevented the South Korean policy of détente (Sunshine Policy) from being continued.

The issue is therefore whether the conservative unilateralists in the USA will get involved in a local attempt at dialogue, and if so whether the government in Pyongyang will then be prepared to accept this as a joint attempt at negotiation, or whether a prolonged period of confrontation is now inevitable. Besides considering this overridingly important political issue, investigations are being carried out at the level of security policy into which tools can be used to set the process of military confidence building and conventional arms control in motion as soon as possible, despite existing military differences and the deep prevailing mistrust.

2. Military posture

With the economic and political rise of China, Japan and South Korea over the last few decades, North-east and East Asia have gained importance in world politics. More attention is therefore being paid to the problems of security policy in the region. The following text begins by describing important elements in the development of security policy, before going on to examine the parameters that operate on conventional arms control restrictions between North and South Korea. Since the focus is on conventional forces, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are not taken into account. The sea forces of the countries considered are not included because the USA in particular is not prepared to accept any restrictions in this area. However, Marine Corps land and air forces are included because their primary task is to fight on land. Japan's conventional forces are not included, as they (especially the ground forces) are used almost exclusively for national defence and not so much for offensive operations. However, the planned procurement of tanker aircraft will mean that sections of the Japanese air force will be able to reach important military targets in North Korea, China and Russia. Since the collapse of the Russian Pacific Fleet, the US, Japanese and South Korean se have been carrying out the task of sea control on the high seas practically unchallenged. In the eventuality of a war, supply via the Pacific would hardly be put at risk. Besides US troops, those of China and Russia in the region are also included, as these two countries have a bilateral mutual assistance pact linking them with North Korea. The

bilateral military confidence building measures for South Korea and the USA are also included.

2.1. North Korean security and defence policy

Since the Korean War (1950–1953) North Korean security and defence policy has been based on two objectives:³

- safeguarding survival of the nation and its leadership
- reunifying both parts of Korea under North Korean control

These objectives are being pursued in two stages. First of all with the “four military lines”, and secondly with the “three revolutionary forces”. The “four military lines” were announced as a new central tenet for military policy at the 5th sitting of the Central Committee of the Communist Workers’ Party at the end of 1962. This called for:

- arming of the entire population,
- fortifications for the entire country,
- professional training of all soldiers, and
- modernization of weapons.

The programme of the “four military lines” was grounded in North Korea’s constitution in 1992 and confirmed when the constitution was revised in 1998.⁴ This serves to emphasize in particular how important this programme is.

The combined effect of the “three revolutionary forces” is intended to further the reunification of the two parts of Korea. They consist of⁵

- the revolutionary forces in North Korea,
- the revolutionary forces in South Korea, and
- the international revolutionary forces.

Within the framework of both these military policy programmes North Korea’s own troops and population will put up total resistance to defend it against any aggressor. At the same time, in the eventuality of war with South Korea breaking out, they will go on the offensive to reunite both parts of the country within 30 days.

A further additional important element of North Korean security policy is the “Juche” ideology⁶, which dates back to Kim Il-sung’s experiences with Chinese and Soviet

3 Cf. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *The Armed Forces of North Korea*, New York & London 2001, p. 8–9.

4 It was added to Article 60, Chapter IV. Cf. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *The Armed Forces of North Korea* (Footnote 3), p. 9.

5 Ibid.

6 For more detail see Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Der Aufstieg Koreas in die Weltpolitik*, Munich 1994, pp. 137ff.

Communists in joint guerrilla warfare against the Japanese invader. This ideology runs counter to North Korea's Communist leaders orienting themselves too much towards meeting the expectations of foreign powers and foreign Communist institutions. It places more importance on the country's own capabilities and national pride. It makes a significant contribution towards building Korea's national identity. This also explains in part the relatively autonomous development of this country after 1960.

After the end of the Korean War, North Korean foreign and security policy could initially count on the support of Moscow and Beijing. However, the political disagreement between these two countries after 1960 meant that North Korea had to be careful not to become a pawn in the new Sino-Soviet antagonism. It was no longer able to rely on both countries in the same way and therefore concluded a separate bilateral mutual assistance pact with each one in 1961. Added to this, there was the Sino-American rapprochement of 1972 which threatened to shake the foundations of North Korean foreign policy. This was because the country was still in a potential state of war with the USA, there having been merely a cease-fire in force since 1953. Furthermore in the past China had been their most important ally in defence against an American invasion⁷. This renewed insecurity led to the first bilateral agreement on basic principles⁸ with South Korea. In this agreement, both sides committed themselves to the peaceful reunification of Korea.

Insecurity intensified when Deng Xiaoping assumed power in 1975. He took a much more pragmatic line in domestic and foreign policy and established diplomatic relations with the USA in 1978. Another factor to be taken into consideration from the end of the 1970s on was the increasingly weak leadership in the Soviet Union which eventually led to the take-over by the reformers Gorbachev and Shevardnadze in 1985. The policy of economic reform in China and its associated rapprochement with Western countries and Japan, as well as the reconciliation of interests taking shape between the USSR, the USA and the other NATO countries within the framework of the policy of détente, faced the persistently very strictly Communist North Korean leadership with increasing problems at the end of the 1980s.

The two most powerful Communist countries directly bordering North Korea were beginning to change or even question their ideology while developing ever better relations with their erstwhile enemies (the USA and Japan). 1990 also saw both parts of Germany

7 In 1950 Kim Il-sung had picked the fight that started the Korean War with the knowledge of Moscow and Beijing, after the USA 1948 had withdrawn its troops from South Korea. Only the prompt intervention of American troops prevented the rapid defeat of South Korea. Pressurized by the South Koreans, US troops under General MacArthur then later overcame North Korea. In the process, the American military was openly discussing whether North Korean units could also be attacked from Chinese territory, and there was debate in the USA over whether Mao Tse-tung's takeover could be undone by military means. As a result, the Chinese government felt provoked and deployed its troops heavily in favour of North Korea. In this way it forced a renewed partition of Korea along the 38th parallel. For more detail see Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Der Aufstieg Koreas* (Footnote 6), pp. 63–87.

8 The "South-North Joint Communiqué" of 4 July 1972 regulates the cooperation and reunification of Korea. Reunification should be achieved peacefully, without the use of violence or the intervention of foreign powers. See Karl Kindermann, *Der Aufstieg Koreas* (Footnote 6), pp. 112–118.

reunified peacefully under capitalist principles and the global fall of the ideology of Communist rule. Furthermore South Korea's economy had developed much more successfully than that of the North, despite the South having far fewer natural resources. South Korea's gross national product per capita is up to 16 times greater than that of North Korea.⁹

Consequently, two of the three "revolutionary forces" barely exist any more. The North Korean leadership, which persisted in clinging to its traditional Communist ideology, found itself increasingly isolated as regards foreign affairs and was even faced with the fear that its own economically ever more inefficient system of rule would collapse. During this critical phase there was a renewed rapprochement between North and South Korea in 1991. This led to a second basic cooperation agreement¹⁰, which it has however so far not been possible to implement.

Building up strong military forces and increasingly developing weapons (especially long range missiles) on their own soil is a reflex to the international change, which they have so far largely sought to deny is happening. The decision to develop their own nuclear weapons from the end of the 1980s at the latest must also have been closely connected with these international changes and their own refusal to conform. Pyongyang is also thought to have chemical and biological weapons¹¹ at its disposal, although it entered into the Biological Weapon Convention in 1987.

One of the poorest countries in the world, with a population of just under 22 million people, North Korea possesses the world's fifth largest army, in terms of quantities at least, with almost 1.1 million soldiers on active service, 4.7 million reservists, and tens of thousands of conventional weapons (up to 3,800 tanks, 2,500 armoured combat vehicles, 12,500 artillery pieces, 620 combat aircraft and 24 combat helicopters). Some 60% of North Korean troops are stationed in a 100 kilometre wide strip north of the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone).¹² It expends between 25 and 33% of gross national product on its military defence (South Korea 3.2%).¹³ About 30% of the population aged between 15 and

9 Cf. Comparison of economic indices between South and North Korea, in: The Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000, Seoul 2001, Appendix 4, p. 271; also CIA (publ.), The World Factbook 2001, South Korea, in: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ks.html. The gross domestic product would be better suited as an indicator here, but there is no comparable data.

10 See Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North of 13 December 1991, in: The Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), pp. 291–293.

11 Cf. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., The Armed Forces of North Korea (Footnote 3), pp. 224–243. Likewise: The Ministry of National Defense ROK, 2001 Defense Data (Footnote 1), pp. 8–9.

12 See Statement of Admiral Dennis C. Blair, U.S. Navy Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Fiscal Year 2002 Posture Statement 27 March 2001, p. 6. Likewise Statement of General Thomas A. Schwartz, Commander in Chief United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command & Commander, United States Forces Korea before the House Appropriations Committee-Defense Subcommittee 8 March 2001, p. 5, in: www.defenselink.mil/dodgc/lrs/docs/test01-03-08Schwartz.rtf.

13 See CIA (publ.), The World Factbook 2001, North Korea, in: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html.

60 years play some form of active part in the military defence of North Korea. The People's Army is North Korea's largest employer. It would therefore not be exaggerating to say that the North Korean people can currently be considered as by far the most heavily militarized society in the world.

Undoubtedly the large number of artillery pieces poses a particular threat, including 2,500 multiple launch rocket systems alone that could be deployed against the South Korean capital of Seoul from bunker positions near the border, as the capital is only 40 kilometres away from the DMZ. Over a quarter of South Koreans live in Seoul and the surrounding area (from a total of 48 million), who generate almost 50% of gross national product. A North Korean attack with a clearly defined target could therefore result in huge losses for South Korea. At the same time superior quantities of artillery could be used to make rapid offensive breakthroughs into South Korea through the band of mines near the border. A further problem takes the form of some 100,000 headcount special operation forces, that could attack South Korea from the air (An-2), from offshore (special submarines) and through secret tunnels¹⁴ beneath the DMZ and could open up a second front. However, Pyongyang is only able to move part of these forces at the same time.¹⁵

There are also the intensive efforts to develop their own long-range missiles from the Soviet single-stage SCUD missile systems with a range of 300 kilometres. Since 1998 they have had operational missile systems with an estimated range of up to 1,300 kilometres (No-Dong 2). In total there are thought to be 500 different SCUD-type missiles in existence.¹⁶ In the last twenty years North Korea has developed and tested several – including some multi-stage – kinds of missile (Taepo-dong 1, Ro-dong 2) with a range of 1,300 to 4,000 kilometres.¹⁷ Work on developing missiles with an even longer range (Taepo-dong 2, No-dong 3) is thought to be in progress. Ballistic missiles with a range of 500 kilometres cover the whole of South Korean territory. With a range of up to 1,500 kilometres they can threaten US bases in Japan (including Okinawa) as well as the country's major cities and military installations, with a range of up to 2,500 kilometres other US bases in Asia, with a range of up to 6,000 kilometres Alaska and Hawaii, and over 6,000 kilometres US territory itself.¹⁸ The target precision of these missiles is however too limited for purely conventional military tasks. They become a threat only if they are armed with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads. North Korea's missile technology was and is one of the most important export items for earning foreign currency. Missiles

14 To date four North Korean tunnels under the DMZ have been discovered and closed by American and South Korean troops. It is supposed that up to 20 further such secret tunnels might exist.

15 Cf. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *The Armed Forces of North Korea* (Footnote 3), p. 102.

16 Cf. Statement of General Thomas A. Schwartz, Commander in Chief United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command and Commander, United States Forces Korea before the Senate Armed Services Committee 7 March 2000, in: usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/schwartz.htm.

17 Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *The Armed Forces of North Korea* (Footnote 3), pp. 236–291, especially pp. 276–277.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 256.

or their components, and also their technology, are mainly supplied to Pakistan, Iran, Egypt, Syria and Libya.

North Korea's security and defence policy is faced with significant challenges. Due to the economic decline of the 1990s, the government is not in a position to earn the foreign currency necessary for comprehensive modernization of the armed forces and the purchase of new weapons. Added to this, the growing backwardness of their own civil economy makes developing their own military equipment increasingly expensive. It is not possible to carry out radical modernization of every area of the forces that needs it with their own resources. North Korea can no longer – with one or two exceptions (e.g. in missile technology) – keep pace with arms development in terms of quality. Its tanks and combat aircraft are predominantly obsolete. The majority of its tanks are the Russian models T-34, T-55, T-62 and the Chinese model 59. The situation is hardly better for the air force, which flies mainly variations of the Russian Su-7, MiG-17, MiG-19 and MiG-21. Just under one hundred systems (MiG-23, Su-25 and MiG-29) can be assessed as slightly more modern. The primary role of the navy is to protect the coast, and frigates and corvettes make up the largest categories of vessel. However it does have limited offensive capabilities in the form of around 60 small special submarines (for special forces) and more than 130 air cushion landing crafts.

In the 1990s economic poverty compelled North Korean forces to reduce their exercise operations drastically due to lack of fuel, especially in the case of the air force. In the last two years however this situation is supposed to have improved slightly.¹⁹ Another factor to be considered is that in general their logistic capabilities and supplies of ammunition are judged to be inadequate in view of the large number of weapons. They would not be in a position to engage in prolonged and intensive fire during combat. The South Korean and American air forces can in any case relatively easily prevent any offensive breakthroughs southwards by North Korean mechanized units, as only a few valleys permit this in South Korea's mountainous terrain.

At present, the main threat for a military conflict lies mainly in the weakness of the North Korean regime. This will continue to grow in the next few years, even though the country's recent opening has released some of the tension from the situation. There is therefore the risk that the North Korean government might seek to save its own political system, if threatened with collapse, by renewing warfare with South Korea. Furthermore this weakness increases the attraction of getting hold of weapons of mass destruction and long-range carrier systems.

2.2 South Korean security and defence policy

South Korean defence policy is largely determined by experiences of the Korean War. The presence of American troops on the Korean peninsula has been a keystone of South Korean deterrent and defence policy since the war, although the balance of military power

19 See Statement of General Thomas A. Schwartz (Footnote 12), p. 5.

has in the mean time altered clearly in favour of Seoul. In terms of security policy, US troops are supposed to safeguard independence and sovereignty in the face of its far more powerful neighbours China and Russia, and ensure military control of Japan. The South Korean government now bears more than 50% of costs of stationing US troops (not including the wages of US soldiers and their civilian employees). Military doctrine resembles early NATO doctrine of forward defence. Ground units, supported by extensive mining of the border, have to hold back an attacker on the offensive in the 250 kilometre long DMZ as near to the border as possible. The air force, oriented towards the offensive, must meanwhile be able to combat the opposing advance even on its own territory. To this end, South Korean troops have almost 650,000 soldiers (not including marines), 2,400 combat tanks, 2,500 armoured combat vehicles, 5,400 artillery pieces, 560 combat aircraft and almost 120 combat helicopters.²⁰ In addition to this they can mobilize over 3 million reservists in the event of crisis or war.

In contrast to North Korea, the South Korean forces were able to update their potential continuously due to the country's strong economic development. Its readiness for battle and level of training are judged to be significantly higher than that of North Korean troops. Their ageing M-48 tanks have been upgraded several times, and the South Korean version (model 88) of the American M-1 tank almost matches its capabilities. The 160 KF-16 combat aircraft form the core of the air force and a proportion of the older F-4 combat aircraft are to be replaced by a more modern model from Europe (Raphale Mk. 2), or from the USA (F-15K). For ground-based air defence there are plans to buy the Patriot PAC-3 Version (SAM-X), which in a limited capacity can also be used for tactical missile defence. Plans are also afoot to procure a new combat helicopter (AH-X).²¹ From 2004 the Korean army aims to put 29 ATACM launchers (Block 1a) with 111 missiles into service, which have a range of 300 kilometres and supplement the ATACM pieces (Block 1) in place since 1997 with a range of 165 kilometres.²² Added to this, from 2005, are new satellite systems to improve military communication and the precision of guided munitions aircraft.²³

In the 1990s the South Korean Ministry of National Defense also began to make contact on a bilateral basis with the Japanese, Russian and Chinese forces and introduce a process of military confidence building. The aim of these contacts was to negotiate their own policy of reconciliation and reunification with the DPRK, so as to mitigate right from the start any concerns that neighbouring countries might have with regard to security policy in the face of a united Korea.²⁴

20 For data sources see data comparison on page 14.

21 See Shim Jae Hoon, Craig Hoyle, South Korea revises plan for attack helicopter, in: *Janes Defense Weekly* of 28 November 2001, p. 5. There are plans to purchase 40 combat aircraft and 36 helicopters.

22 See Hwang Jang-jin, Korea to deploy first Missile with 300-km range, in: *The Korean Herald*, 4 January 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dis/2002/01/04/200201040067.asp.

23 Cf. Kim Deok-hyun, Korea Plans to Launch Military Satellite in 2005, in: *The Korean Times*, 9 January 2002, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/times/200201/t2002010916520940110.htm.

24 See Ministry of National Defense ROK, *Defense White Paper 2000* (Footnote 9), p. 119.

Shortly after China and the ROK had opened diplomatic relations, both sides exchanged military attachés in 1993/94. Since Kim Dae-jung's visit to China in 1998 and the agreement of a cooperative partnership for the 21st century, military relations with the former opponent have continued to improve.²⁵ Sports competitions between the two countries' armed forces have formed a departure point for this, as has the introduction of exchange visits by officers since 1999. In 2000 the Chinese defence minister visited Seoul for the first time, after his South Korean counterpart in Beijing had visited him the previous year. Since then, several meetings have taken place at ministerial level, and following the last talks in December 2001 these are to take place regularly in future.²⁶ In 2001 a South Korean naval unit visited China (Shanghai), and the visit will be reciprocated this year by a Chinese unit.

After opening diplomatic relations with Russia in 1990 the countries exchanged military attachés the following year.²⁷ After 1994 talks at the level of defence minister and an extensive programme of exchange visits by senior officers on both sides were begun. At the same time the meeting marked the beginning of institutionalizing military confidence building. In the same year an Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents at Sea beyond Territorial Waters was passed, which has since been reviewed in annual talks. 1996 saw a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Military Cooperation, and 1997 an Agreement on Military Science, Defence Industry and Logistics Cooperation. An MOU on Mutual Visits by Officers followed in 1998. In the mean time the naval forces of both countries have practised joint search and rescue operations at sea, and annual consultation meetings are held for the exchange of views on the defence policy of both countries. Negotiations on a Pact for the Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities are ongoing. Furthermore, in the second half of the 1990s South Korea acquired 80 Russian T-80 tanks and 40 BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles as part of reducing Russian debts (amounting to three thousand million US dollars).²⁸ Because the supply of replacement parts by Russian firms is slow and complicated, however, these efforts by the South Korean defence ministry were discontinued.

Military contacts with Japan were also intensified in the 1990s after military attachés were exchanged in 1966.²⁹ The defence ministers have been meeting every year since 1994, and from 1998 onwards consultation concerning security policy was significantly expanded. In 1999 emergency communications channels were set up between the South Korean defence ministry and the Japanese Defense Agency, and also between the respec-

25 Ibid, pp. 122–123.

26 See the outcome of the last bilateral ministerial meeting in Beijing on 13 December 2001, in: ROK-China Defense Ministerial Talks' outcome and significance reconfirmed China backs the ROK's policy toward North of 26 December 2001, in: www.mnd.go.kr/mndeng_servlet/brd07S_v?gesi_code1=07&gesi_code2=01&gesi_code3=00&gesi_seqno=20011226150818.

27 For more detail see Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), pp. 122–123.

28 See IISS (publ.), The Military Balance 2000–2001, p. 203.

29 Cf. Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), pp. 120f.

tive air and marine forces, and the first joint search and rescue operation on high seas with these sections of the forces was carried out. Since 2000 an exchange scheme for military cadets was begun between the Korean Military Academy and the Naval Academy to Japan's Defense University. In 2001 there was a temporary setback to bilateral military relations caused by the one-sided representation of history in new Japanese school history books. Once the South Korean and Japanese presidents had decided in autumn last year to set up a joint commission for reworking the books, South Korea embarked once more upon the process of military confidence building.³⁰

This illustrates by way of example the extent to which the European process of military confidence building has spread as far as North-east Asia and contributed towards monitoring and dismantling the military threat there. South Korean armed forces can meanwhile look back on substantial experience gained in this field. One striking aspect is that there are CSBMs in place between democratic countries (ROK and Japan) and also between democratic and non-democratic countries. This kind of relation is least developed with the strongly authoritarian leadership of China and most developed with democratic Japan. The CSBMs with the Russian Federation as it becomes more democratic fall somewhere in the middle of these two poles. Japan's readiness to implement such measures is closely linked with its aggressive imperial history and is intended to mollify its neighbours. In this way South Korea's dialogue concerning security policy is bound up with growing military cooperation, and therefore in the long term its own security will be more closely linked with that of Japan.

2.3. US Forces for South Korea

Defence of South Korea is part of the task of the US troops in the Pacific. When the Cold War came to an end, the headcount of American troops in the Pacific (not counting the navy) was cut from 150,000 to currently about 100,000 men.³¹ Besides the defence of South Korea, their main tasks³² include protecting Taiwan, keeping sea routes open in the South China Sea, should military conflict break out between China and its neighbours to the south, and protecting Japan. The latter task comprises a certain element of monitoring intended to prevent Tokyo from trying to become a great military power again and procure weapons of mass destruction for itself. In September 1997 the New Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation were expanded. Japanese self defence forces took on more responsibility not only for security on their own territory but also for a larger area (up to 1000 sea miles) around their islands. In this way the USA is attempting to make the economically very powerful Japan contribute more towards the costs of security in North-east Asia. Since 11 September 2001 there have been renewed talks between America and

30 See Hwang Jang-jin, Korea, Japan to resume joint military exercises, in: *The Korea Herald*, 19 January 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/01/19/200201190042.asp.

31 See Stanley B. Weeks, Charles A. Meconis, *The Armed Forces of the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region*, London, New York 1999, pp. 252–255. The figures do not include US Marines in the Pacific.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 222.

Japan about how Japan can support the USA with additional military efforts in the region and on a global scale. In view of the negative experiences of many neighbouring countries with Japanese armed forces in the past (also in Korea) this development has been partly viewed with some considerable criticism.

US armed forces of the Pacific Command are composed as follows (excluding the marines):³³ the air force (US Pacific Air Force = PACAF) maintains just over 38,000 soldiers with approx. 300 combat aircraft at nine main bases. The largest proportion of forces are stationed in Alaska, on Hawaii, on Guam, in Japan (90 combat aircraft) and in South Korea. In addition there are just over 50,000 soldiers from the US Army. The main contingent of American ground troops is stationed in South Korea, and a further 1,600 men in Japan and 15,000 men from the easily transferred 25th Light Infantry Division on Hawaii. The US Marine Corps (USMC) has an estimated 25,000 marines with 150 to 160 combat aircraft and helicopters in the West Pacific. Of these, some 18,000 marines are stationed in Japan and 5,700 on Hawaii. Up to 400 combat aircraft can get to the scene on up to four aircraft carriers and helicopter carriers of the US Pacific Fleet. In the event of needing to provide defence, US Augmentation Forces can be increased by up to 690,000 soldiers.³⁴

During the Korean War and with the agreement to a cease-fire the USA undertook the protection of South Korea by means of its stationed troops (US Forces in Korea = USFK). The basis for this is the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1 October 1953.³⁵ In total just under 37,000 men are currently present in South Korea, 9,000 of whom are soldiers in the air force and 27,000 in the ground forces.³⁶ As its main large unit the 2nd Infantry Division is one of the units with the most up-to-date arms equipment (M-1A tanks, M-2/-3 infantry fighting vehicles, M-109A2/A3 self propelled howitzers) in the American ground forces. Affiliated with it are a combat helicopter brigade with 70 AH-64 attack helicopters and an artillery unit with 30 long-range multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS). The land-based US Air Defense relies on the Patriot (PAC 2) system which can also be used for tactical missile defence. For rapid reinforcements the combat equipment of a heavy brigade is also in store. The 7th US Air Force maintains two air wings in Korea in two bases (Osan, Kunsan) with nearly 90 combat aircraft (F-16, A-10) as well as some U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. In crisis situations rapid reinforcements can be sent from Japan (90 combat aircraft, 18,000 marines) and Hawaii (20,000 US Army and USMC soldiers).

33 Figures are based on, IISS (publ.), *The Military Balance 2001–2002*, pp. 26f. See also: 2000 Report to Congress *Military Situation on the Korean Peninsula* of 12 September 2000.

34 This figure is reached only if US forces are not involved in any other military conflict and takes US Marine personnel into account. Cf. The Ministry of National Defense ROK, *Defense White Paper 2000* (Footnote 9), pp. 81–82.

35 See Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America, in: The Ministry of National Defense ROK, *Defense White Paper 2000* (Footnote 9), pp. 312f.

36 For information on how American troops are stationed in South Korea cf. Stanley B. Weeks, Charles A. Meconis, *The Armed Forces of the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Footnote 31), p. 95.

It is as yet unclear how US forces in the region will evolve, since the events of 11 September 2001 will probably have a significant influence on future military plans. Another factor to be considered is that it is not yet possible accurately to assess the effects of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), whose development is supposed to be being precipitated under US Defense Minister Donald Rumsfeld. As in Europe, the growing technological differences in military capability between the USA and South Korea create ever greater problems for joint operations, even if they are not judged to be that serious. Success in the RMA and adaptation of US military planning to the increased threat represented by international terrorist networks may favour further reductions in American troops in Korea.³⁷

When diplomatic relations between China and the USA were opened, contact between senior military officers from both countries was intensified. Up to mid 1989 an almost lively reciprocal amount of visiting went on between senior officers and defence politicians, which the US government abruptly brought to an end after the massacre of Tiananmen Square by Chinese troops. In August 1994 military contacts were cautiously struck up again, but differences over the Taiwan issue led to renewed interruptions at times.³⁸ In 1997 the first naval exchange visits took place, which led to military dialogue being institutionalized. The Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to the USA in the same year led to completion in early 1998 of an Agreement between the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of China and the Department of Defense of the USA on Establishing a Consultation Mechanism to Strengthen Military Maritime Safety. The agreement provides for a regular review mechanism. It was extended by a further agreement in the same year, covering cooperative measures in terms of humanitarian aid, in the event of natural disasters, protection of the environment in the military domain and the exchange of observers during military exercises. Furthermore, during Clinton's visit to Beijing in June 1998 both presidents declared that they would no longer aim their nuclear weapons at each other. Regular senior defence consultations were arranged at the level of the deputy defence ministers, which took place four times until the end of the Clinton administration and were used to plan military contacts and exchange measures. After the Americans bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the Kosovo War in early May 1999 there was a renewed breakdown in relations that lasted until early 2000.³⁹ On 21 November 2000 the Chinese government declared itself ready to observe most MTCR regulations in future, without actually becoming a member of the MTCR. Further bilateral negotiations on the lists of materials and technologies covered by the above were requested.

37 Cf. Shim Jae-yun, US may cut forces in Korea, in: *The Korean Times*, 23 December 2001, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/times/200112/t2001122316492740110.htm; see also Bryan Bender, Terror remaps US Troop deployment, in: *The Boston Globe*, 17 January 2002, p. A1.

38 See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic, Military Exchange Between China and the U.S. in: www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4956.html.

39 On American military contacts in 2000 see the Report on Military-to-Military Exchanges with the People's Liberation Army of 8 June 2001 after the law passed by the US Congress approving the defence budget for the fiscal year 2000 (Public Law 106-65, Section 1201(e)).

The US government under Clinton conducted military confidence building with the main aim of creating more openness and accountability between both countries in the domain of security and defence policy. This was to avoid misunderstandings and dispel unnecessary tensions in precisely the issue of Taiwan. While the US forces opened themselves right up to the Chinese military and defence politicians, the Chinese government limited such contacts largely to its own ground forces and excluded the other military institutions almost completely. The conservative majority in the US Congress insisted therefore in deciding to approve funds for the fiscal year 2000 that reciprocity be strictly observed and has since demanded an annual report on these contacts.⁴⁰

When Bush took office these relations were reviewed and were brought to a complete standstill after the collision between a US observation aircraft and a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea in early April 2001. The consultation mechanism agreed in 1998 had to pass a serious test. The economic interests of both sides and the Chinese support in the fight against terrorism after 11 September 2001, as well as Bush's visit to China at the end of February 2002, led to a noticeable improvement in contacts, which until then had taken place only periodically and observing the principle of reciprocity if it served American interests. Perhaps regular military contacts will be started again this year, which besides the duties agreed to date will also be useful in the joint fight against terrorism, cooperation in peace-keeping operations and the fight against drugs and piracy.⁴¹ However, the publication of the secret American Nuclear Posture Review, in which the first strike with nuclear weapons is not ruled out even against China, and the welcome of the Taiwanese defence minister to Washington, could lead to renewed ill-feeling.⁴²

40 Ibid.

41 See U.S. Pacific Commander Says No Sanctuary for Terrorists in Asia, Washington File, 27 February 2002, in: usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl?p=/products/washfile/latest&f=02022704.elt&t=/products/washfile/newsitem.shtml.

42 Cf. China wirft Amerika „nukleare Erpressung“ vor, in: FAZ, 18 March 2002, p. 6.

Quantitative comparison of conventional weapons between North and South Korea and directly neighbouring countries in North-east Asia in 2000 (including naval infantry) ⁴³

	Personnel	Tanks	Armoured Combat Vehicles	Artillery	Combat Aircraft	Combat Helicopters
RUSSIA MD Far East	138,000*	3,900	6,400	3,000	515 with MD Siberia	85
CHINA MR Shenyang	250,000*	2,000	1,800	n/a	up to 1,000	n/a
DPRK	1,046,000	3,500 - 3,800	2,300- 2,500	11,500- 12,500	621	24+
ROK	623,00 0- 647,000	2,360 - 2,390	2,400- 2,543	5,230- 5,425	560	117
USFK	36,200	116	237	60	90	70
USFJ	34,500	100*	300+*	300*	90+	50*
JAPAN	235,600	1,080	840	800	363	90
Difference btw USFK + ROK and DPRK	- 363,000	- 1,000- 1,320	+ 280- 480	- 6,015- 7,110	+29	+163

* estimate

43 Sources: Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), p. 32, 36, 39, 50–55, 74–81; IISS (Ed.), The Military Balance 2000–2001, p. 29, 33, 124f., 195, 201–205.

Geographical Map of North-east Asia



DMZ:	Demilitarized Zone
MR Shenyang:	Military Region Shenyang (China)
MD Far East:	Military District Far East (the whole of the section of Russia shown above belongs to the MD Far East, which extends from the MD Siberia bordering it to the west up to the Arctic. The borderlines within Russia demarcate the administrative borders between the Primorskiy, Khabarovskiy and Amur regions.)

A comparison of joint ROK and US troops with North Korean forces gives the following picture. A purely quantitative comparison shows that North Korea is superior only in number of soldiers (+360.0000), tanks (+1300) and primarily artillery (+7000), and in the other arms categories studied (armoured combat vehicles, combat helicopters, combat aircraft) the South Korean and American forces together are superior in number. If in addition the increasing qualitative advantages of the ROK and US units are taken into consideration (higher degree of mechanization, capacity for fighting with combined weapons, education and leadership advantages), the DPRK can only be assumed to have a significant superiority in military terms as far as artillery and special troops are concerned. A consequence of this for South Korea is the "hostage role" of the Seoul area described above. North Korea, on the other hand, should consider itself threatened mainly by the superior air force of the USA, which opens up possibilities for offensives to the ROK and US ground troops, which although smaller in number, are better equipped.

2.4. Russian defence policy

In the past the Soviet Union was an important ally of Pyongyang, even though both countries shared only a narrow section of border 19 kilometres in length to the north-east of North Korea. Since 1961 the basis of this has been a Treaty of Mutual Assistance, which guaranteed Pyongyang military support from the Soviet Union and later Russia in the event of an attack. However, with the end of the East-West conflict and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Moscow under Russian President Boris Yeltsin largely lost interest in North Korea. On the one hand Russia was quite sufficiently occupied with itself and its efforts to modernize its country, on the other the worsening economic problems in North Korea and the reluctance of the political leadership to reform scarcely offered any prospects of reviving bilateral relations. The conversion of Russian foreign trade to hard foreign currency created additional problems for a North Korea deeply in debt and chronically short of foreign currency. Furthermore, Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions in the early 1990s were greeted with reservation and disapproval even in Moscow. At the end of the day, they did not want to be drawn into a confrontation with the USA by Pyongyang.

Relations have been newly reopened only under President Putin, who would like to boost Russia's role on the world stage once more. In February 2000, this led to a new North Korea-Russia Treaty of Fraternity, Amity, and Cooperation, which replaces the old Treaty of Mutual Assistance of 1961.⁴⁴ The obligation to give mutual assistance was played down and a stronger emphasis placed on the aspect of mutual cooperation. Since this, Russia no longer regards itself simply as the provider of security and North Korea as the recipient. At the same time Russia is very interested in a road and rail link from Russia through North Korea to South Korea⁴⁵, in order to be able to conduct the increased

44 Cf. The Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), pp. 43–44.

45 See Shim Jae-yun, Russia opens railway office in P'yang over TSR (Transsiberian Railway) project, in: The Korean Times, 19 December 2001, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/kt_nation/200112/t2001121917272341110.htm.

foreign trade with Seoul more easily and open up a new source of income to North Korea for the payment of its debts. The economic development of the southern Russian regions of Primorskiy and Khabarovskiy in the Far East should be more strongly inter-linked with the economic dynamism of South Korea. This represents an important step towards strengthening the weak economy and infrastructure in Siberia and the Russian Far East. In this way, the draining away of the Russian population will be stopped and the growing influence of China will be more effectively resisted.⁴⁶ The unaccustomed journey to Moscow by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il on the Transsiberian Railway in August 2001 helped to further these goals.

Furthermore, there are hopes in the Kremlin that by offering political support for the opening of the North Korean border, this will at least partially reduce Russia's own debts to South Korea. The Russian arms industry has begun limited arms exports to North Korea within the framework of the supply agreement concluded in April 2001.⁴⁷ The priority concern is deliveries of replacement parts, but also aircraft components for the final assembly of the MiG-29 fighter jet. However, Moscow is pressing for prompt payment for these deliveries and of outstanding debts.

Russia's willingness to support the modernization of North Korean forces could make it easier for the political leadership in Pyongyang to allow itself to be more transparent and limit its military potential to act. Larger Russian arms deliveries in view of Pyongyang's lack of foreign currency are not very likely as it is, and in any case Moscow would then rapidly be running counter to its economic interests in South Korea.

It must be stressed in the narrower military domain that of the 1990s, Russia dismantled its forces less radically in Siberia and the Military District of the Far East than in Europe. Otherwise Russian troops there suffer from the same problems as in Europe. Wages are paid late, there are hardly any resources for the education, training and exercise programmes, it has not been possible to modernize arms since the early 1990s due to financial reasons. Russian forces would therefore, from the military point of view, scarcely be in a position to support North Korea in a meaningful way in the event of war, and the Kremlin would certainly seek to avoid such a confrontation for political reasons. At best they would be able to deliver arms, ammunition and repair parts. For this reason the following figures for military strength in the Military District of the Russian Far East should be viewed with considerable reservation, even if the largest proportion is stationed in the southern more densely populated regions near the Chinese and North Korean

46 In the region of Primorskiy alone with two million inhabitants 20,000 Russians currently leave the Far East every year for economic and social reasons. See Virginie Coulloudon, *Exodus from the Russian Far East*, in: RFE/RL Newline, Vol. 6, No. 17, Part I, 28 January 2002.

47 In negotiations North Korea requested the delivery of modern combat aircraft, S-300 air defence missiles, new radar systems, T-90 tanks and new combat ships with a displacement of more than 3000t (frigate category), and linked this with being prepared to support Russia in the joining up of a new rail link between North and South Korea to the Transsiberian Railway. Cf. 'Russia, N.K. make progress on high-tech weapons trade', in: *The Korean Herald*, 30 July 2001, in: www.mofat.go.kr/ko/info/sisa_view.mof?seq_no=2789&b_code=sisa_2&si_dcode=ZZ-99. In the light of these substantial demands Russian concessions have so far been small.

border. In 2001 Moscow was maintaining there in ground and air forces an estimated 138,000 soldiers, 3,900 tanks, 6,400 armoured combat vehicles, 3,000 artillery pieces, 515 combat aircraft (including MD Siberia) and 85 combat helicopters.⁴⁸ With the exception of a few units, most of the units are cadred, which means that they could only be deployed after comprehensive measures to mobilize personnel.

Particularly significant from a military point of view is the port of Vladivostok near the North Korean border, home to the command of the Russian Pacific Fleet which as its main base is kept free of ice all year round by means of icebreakers. This is also important for economic development, as Vladivostok is the eastern terminus of the Transsiberian Railway.

Since President Putin wants to reduce Russian armed forces to about one million soldiers by 2004, there will most likely be further troop reductions in the Russian Far East, but it is not yet known to what extent. Major modernizations of Russian units can be expected, if they happen at all, at the earliest between 2006 to 2010. For reasons of economy and security policy, Moscow has considerable interest in the South Korean policy of détente and therefore firmly supports it.

2.5. Chinese defence policy

The end of the East-West conflict spelled drastic change in the threatening situation for China as well. Russia and the other Soviet succession states are hardly seen to pose a military threat any longer. On the contrary, cooperation as regards security policy and military affairs has clearly increased between Moscow and Beijing within the framework of their new strategic cooperation by mean of a variety of military activities – including the supply of the latest conventional Russian weapons. For this reason, Beijing is pursuing a more non-aggressive defence programme. Since 1996 this has also been revealed by China's only conventional arms control agreement, concluded with Russia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tadjikistan along a common border of 6,450 kilometres.⁴⁹

China's defence policy is currently designed around waging war on a regional scale (including warfare on two fronts). They are not looking for global conflict with the USA, but are concentrating on possible military threats in the immediate vicinity (Taiwan, Japan, Korea, India, Pakistan, Islamic fundamentalism). In this context, potential conflicts with the United States are nonetheless not ruled out. Nuclear arms are therefore used on a global and regional level to prevent other nuclear powers from carrying out a military

48 For data sources see military data comparison on page 14.

49 Originally concluded between the Soviet Union and China in 1990, the agreement was also joined up to 1996 by the successor countries to the Soviet Union mentioned above. The agreement makes provision for every contracting party to create a 100 kilometre wide zone with a reduced military presence along the border it shares with each of the other participating countries. It also includes an annual exchange of information and exchange visits for observation. Cf. Agreement between the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tadjikistan and the People's Republic of China on Confidence Building in the Military field in the Border area.

attack on the People's Republic of China. Conventional defence planning is based on regional military conflicts, in so-called war zones. The division of the country into seven military regions is oriented towards these potential war zones.

After the second Gulf War, Chinese military planners devoted themselves afresh to the consequences of this for their own defence planning and have since been keenly debating the consequences of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Procurement of the latest Russian fighter bomber (Su-27/-30) and destroyer (Sovremenny class) are considered to be a reasonably priced temporary solution to buy time for developing their own advanced conventional weapons. At the same time they want to benefit from the most advanced Russian arms technology.

In their latest reforms, Chinese forces emphasize the "from quantity to quality" principle.⁵⁰ In the course of their modernization the "manpower-intensive" is to be replaced by the "knowledge-intensive". Personnel levels have been cut from 6.1 million soldiers in the 1960s to 2.5 million. Priority has been given to modernizing the air force, naval units and missile forces since the 1980s and in particular since the second Gulf War. China's forces are moving to develop a high-tech army in the long term. They have therefore been paying increasing attention to electronic warfare over the last few years. Since 1989 the annual defence budget increased nominally by an average of 10% until 1999, rising to 12.7% in 2000, and even to 17% in 2001.⁵¹ The ground troops of the People's Liberation Army are currently losing the clear-cut role they had to play in the defence of China. At the same time, the defence doctrine has developed from the non-aggressive "people's defence" throughout the country, via "active defence" near the border, to "forward defence". The programme of forward defence is being implemented in particular on China's east and south borders. It also incorporates offensive tactics. This is especially true of the explicit threat to stage a military take-over of Taiwan should it revoke the One-China principle and declare its independence. Chinese forces are now in a position to stage spot offensive operations. This gives increasing cause for concern to some neighbouring countries.

Even if these developments seem very impressive at first glance, it must be remembered that the Chinese leadership was already putting economic modernization before military reform before the end of the East-West conflict. In the face of the globally diminishing military threat in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s there was also no reason for taking measures to become fully armed. Chinese forces have therefore had to struggle against chronic funding problems in their modernization programme in the last two decades.⁵² The budget increase in the last two years has admittedly alleviated the difficulties without removing them in any way. They have to set main emphases and are scarcely capable of carrying out an overall improvement of their military capacities in all four services of the forces even in the future.

50 Cf. You Il, *The Armed Forces Of China*, New York, London 1999, p. XVIII.

51 See Ministry of National Defense ROK, *Defense White Paper 2000* (Footnote 9), p. 36.

52 Cf. You Il, *The Armed Forces of China* (Footnote 50), p. 60.

The politically and financially induced restraint in developing Chinese forces has eased the building of economic and political relations with South Korea since official relations were established in 1992. While North Korea is increasingly dependent on generous food aid from China due to its growing poverty and bad harvests, South Korea has far outstripped its northerly brother in foreign trade with China.⁵³ Furthermore the bleak economic situation in North Korea is giving rise to increasing numbers of North Korean economic refugees in Manchuria. There are now some 100,000 to 300,00 North Korean refugees, although China is constantly repatriating them. There is also concern in Beijing over the nuclear ambitions of Pyongyang, as this is after all at odds with the goals of the policy of non-proliferation of the five nuclear powers.

Since its opening up to South Korea, China has pursued a policy of equidistance to both Koreas. In so doing, Chinese relations to the DPRK became markedly cooler in the 1990s. Essential to this was the interest in the more economically important South Korea and Chinese economic reforms that Pyongyang did not want to adopt. There was no contact at the highest level for almost ten years. Not until 2000 and afterwards did several meetings take place, which China linked with the hope of economic reforms in North Korea. In Beijing there is also firm support for the ROK's policy of détente and denuclearization towards the DPRK.⁵⁴

China is at the same time attempting to reinforce Pyongyang, to avoid reunification of both Koreas under South Korean leadership. It seeks to curtail the influence of a greater Korea oriented to the west and prevent the USA from getting any closer to its borders. Economic cooperation with North Korea is also intended to create an economic sphere of influence on its borders, should the peaceful integration of Pyongyang into South Korea become unavoidable.⁵⁵

Military cooperation between China and North Korea is based on the Agreement on Peaceful Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of 1961.⁵⁶ One of the seven Chinese military regions, the district of Shenyang, shares a border of over 1,400 kilometres with North Korea. If the need arose, further reinforcements could be transferred to Shenyang from the military region of Jinan, south of Beijing. Four army units are positioned at the Chinese-North Korean border and could back Pyongyang up against a military attack.⁵⁷ The 39th army unit in the south of the military region seems to have modernization as its priority. Chinese forces in Shenyang have at their disposal an estimated 290,000 soldiers

53 See Scott Snyder, *North Korea's Decline and China's Strategic Dilemmas*, United States Institute of Peace Special Report, Washington D.C., in: usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/chinank1/htm.

54 According to the statement of Chinese ambassador Li Bin at his inauguration on 6 December 2001 in Seoul, in: www.korea.net/kwnews/content/xNews.asp?color=RW&Number=20011206013.

55 See Scott Snyder, *North Korea's Decline and China's Strategic Dilemmas* (Footnote 53).

56 See *China and the People's Republic of Korea*, in: www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/4445.html. The mutual assistance pact comprises seven clauses. In the pivotal Clause II both parties promise to resort to every means to prevent any military attack on the other. In the event of an attack by another country or several countries they will devote all their resources towards coming to each other's defence.

57 Cf. You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China* (Footnote 50), p. 48.

(air and ground forces), 2,000 tanks, 1,800 infantry fighting vehicles and 500 to 700 combat aircraft (including 100 land-based navy combat aircraft).⁵⁸ Although the mobility and fire power of the troops are being improved, by increasing the number of multiple missiles launchers, introducing T-90 tanks and increasing the number of combat helicopter units at division level, they are still a long way off matching the military capabilities of the South Korean and more importantly the American forces.

China would do itself double the harm if it were to allow North Korea to draw it into a new confrontation against the USA, Japan and South Korea at the moment. It would then have to let itself in for an expensive arms race against these three countries and at the same time, it would endanger key economic markets in the civil domain. As a consequence of this, social and economic problems in the domestic sphere could drastically worsen. For this reason Beijing is more interested in an area of calm surrounding its foreign policy and a controlled and accountable easing of tensions on the Korean peninsula, so as to partially remove the USA's reasons for maintaining a strong military presence in the region. Pyongyang can therefore no longer rely in the same way on the Chinese guarantee of mutual assistance as it once did in the 1950s.

3. Approaches to arms control policy

The development of the situation concerning military affairs and security policy has been considerably more difficult for North Korea in the face of its economic problems. This begs the question of whether arms control measures and tools would offer North Korea a way out, to reduce the military burden and gain greater capacity for civil economic development. The elimination of military confrontation on the Korean peninsula would help Pyongyang to overcome its international isolation and encourage economic support from abroad. The following section will therefore investigate the problems and prospects of military confidence building and arms control more closely. First of all, experiences to date with these tools will be clarified and a comparative description of the different political programmes given, before concrete measures for confidence building and arms restriction are taken into consideration.

3.1. Evolution of arms control efforts to date

The cease-fire agreement of 1953, that brought the Korean War of 1950 to 1953 to an end comprises the first confidence building measures between both parts of Korea. These include the setting up of a demilitarized zone measuring two kilometres in width on either side of the border and the establishment of a cease-fire commission and a military committee to monitor the agreement. Since the beginning of the 1990s North Korea has withdrawn from the joint cease-fire commission. Only the military committee still meets

58. For data sources see military data comparison on page 14.

as need dictates. In this way North Korea is trying to put political pressure on the USA finally to reach a peace agreement. Since Pyongyang links a peace treaty settlement with the withdrawal of all US troops from South Korea, the USA and South Korea have so far rejected such an agreement.

Early approaches to arms control by both countries have as their origins different ideas about a peaceful reunification of both parts of Korea. South Korea is interested in a slow and supervised process of fusion because of the anticipated costs of reunification. The experiences of German reunification have clearly strengthened South Korea in this approach pursued since 1965. On the basis of this approach Seoul has developed a multi-stage programme which begins with military confidence building measures followed later by arms restrictions and disarmament measures.

North Korea on the other hand has been seeking to bring about reunification as quickly as possible since 1971 in the form of a pan-Korean confederation occupied in equal parts (even though it represents only one third of the Korean population). In so doing, it hopes to dominate the political process because of the division between democratic forces in South Korea.⁵⁹ At the same time South Korean security laws against Communist activities should be lifted to open up extensive potential for action by their own Communist forces in South Korea. Within this framework the forces of both sides should each be reduced to 100,000 men, and only then would military confidence building measures be introduced. In order to make this suggestion more realistic Pyongyang has been ready since the end of the 1980s to cut down the numbers of its soldiers in stages from 300,000 to 100,000.⁶⁰ Furthermore North Korea is demanding that manoeuvres with forces from other countries be stopped and the procurement of modern weapons from abroad forbidden. Offensive weapons are to be reduced in proportion to the reduction in personnel levels.⁶¹ In parallel with this Pyongyang, is pursuing a symmetrical reduction approach that will maintain the superior numbers of its forces.

The Common Declaration of the North and the South of 4 July 1972⁶² and the Basic Agreement of 1991⁶³ represent important milestones in bilateral political rapprochement. In the 1972 agreement, both parties committed to uphold three principles of peaceful reunification. This should take place without the intervention of foreign powers, and in a peaceful and non-violent manner, accompanied by a process of confidence and dis-

59 See the eight point programme by North Korean Foreign Minister Ho Dam of 12 April 1971, Cf. Chuck Downs, *Over the Line*, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 174.

60 Cf. Kim Dongmyung, *Dismantling the cold-war structure and establishing a peace regime on the Korean peninsula*, Research Institute on the National Security Affairs Koran National Defense University, Seoul, September 2001, p. 8.

61 See Yong-sup Han/Paul K. Davis/Richard E. Darilek, *Time for conventional arms control on the Korean Peninsula*, in: *Arms Control Today*, December 2000, p. 17.

62 Cf. Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Der Aufstieg Koreas* (Footnote 6), p. 116.

63 Cf. *Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression and Exchange and Cooperation between the South and the North* 19 December 1991, in: *The Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000* (Footnote 7), pp. 291–293. The agreement is supplemented by two protocols for Chapters I and II of the Basic Agreement.

armament. Concrete steps in this direction were never taken, however, because the political programmes of both parties for unity were not compatible.

A second important milestone is formed by the Basic Agreement, which comprises not only measures for military confidence building and cooperation, but was also supposed to radically improve political, scientific and economic cooperation. In addition to this both parties declared themselves prepared to renounce the possession and manufacture of nuclear weapons. It has not been possible to implement this agreement either to date for political reasons. However it does contain early formalized methods and suggestions in regards to the beginning of military confidence building. Plans were made to set up a joint military commission (South-North Joint Military Commission), to regulate the following tasks:

- mutual notification and control of military movements and exercises;
- peaceful use of the demilitarized zone;
- exchange of military personnel and information;
- reduction of arms in stages, to include destroying weapons of mass destruction and offensive capabilities with the associated verification measures;
- establishment of a hotline between the general staff to prevent an inadvertent collision of forces and possible escalation;
- establishment of a liaison office in Panmunjom.

A military committee is to be set up to promote and monitor these measures below the senior level of South-North discussions. The Basic Agreement has since formed the foundation of possible CSBM and arms control measures for both parts of Korea.

Rather than the Basic Agreement, it was more a case of one-sided approaches to arms control being implemented in the following period.⁶⁴ The USA unilaterally withdrew their tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea by June 1992 as a result of the bilateral discussions between Gorbachev and Bush⁶⁵ and discontinued their team spirit manoeuvre with the South Korean forces since 1994 in conjunction with the talks for the Geneva Framework Agreement. Pyongyang had already been urging for this be abandoned. Previously, North Korea had been invited to observe these exercises on a number of occasions without giving a positive answer.

The Geneva Framework Agreement arose from the North Korean refusal to undergo an inspection called for by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at the end of 1992. The IAEA's insistence on this inspection led to Pyongyang announcing in March 1993 that it was leaving the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which it had not joined until 1985. This resulted in a serious war threatening crisis and subsequently senior-level

64 Cf. Yong-sup Han/Paul K. Davis/Richard E. Darilek, Time for conventional arms control (Footnote 61), p. 17.

65 However the US Pacific Fleet still has an undisclosed number of sea-based cruise missiles (TLAM-N) with nuclear capability on up to 30 submarines in the arsenal, which have a range of almost 2,500 kilometres.

bilateral negotiations between the USA and North Korea, which culminated in the following compromise in 1994/95:

- North Korea freezes its previous nuclear programme (graphite reactor development line), because this makes it easier to produce highly enriched plutonium with military capability, and allows the discharge of its 5 MW research reactor to be monitored.
- As compensation, North Korea receives two 1,000 MW light-water reactors in 2003 for 4.6 billion US dollars on credit.
- Until the two light-water reactors are completed, Pyongyang will be supplied with 500,000 tonnes of crude oil free of charge annually as an interim measure.
- Before the delivery of the nuclear cores of both light-water reactors, the IAEA will be allowed access to all North Korea's nuclear installations.
- The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), which monitors and directs agreed measures, was founded in 1995. The Executive Board is composed of representatives from South Korea, Japan, the USA and the EU.
- Bilateral relations between the USA and North Korea should continue to be improved and the inter-Korean dialogue on denuclearizing the peninsula should be reopened.

The agreement has essentially been observed to date by all parties, however considerable reservations have been aroused in the mean time during the building preparations for many reasons.⁶⁶ The two light-water reactors will probably not be operational until between 2007 and 2010. This means that the original deadline will not be met and it will be necessary to take steps to adapt it in 2003 or 2004 at the latest. North Korea is already demanding compensation for the delay.⁶⁷

The agreement, however, offers no guarantee that Pyongyang may not have siphoned off plutonium (approx. 12 kilogrammes) from its research reactor in the late 1980s to build one or two nuclear bombs. Furthermore, it is not possible for the time being to monitor all of North Korea's nuclear installations. These uncertainties and deficiencies in the Geneva Framework Agreement of 1994 engendered criticism from conservative forces in the USA⁶⁸ and in South Korea. The US government had agreed to such far-reaching concessions because in the early 1990s, they were working on the assumption that North Korea would soon collapse and they therefore hoped that they would not have to implement the agreement to its full extent. These expectations later proved to be mistaken.

66 The reservations have a variety of political, employment law related and bureaucratic roots that can be blamed on each of the participating parties. The original plans did not take these obstacles into account.

67 Cf. Leo Wieland, *Washington weist Forderungen Nordkoreas zurück*, in: FAZ, 20 June 2001, p. 2.

68 By way of example on this subject see the critical report from the Political Committee of the US House of Representatives of 27 July 2000 chaired by Christopher Cox, Text: House July 27 Policy Perspective Paper on Aid to North Korea (North Korea's military capabilities fuelled by U.S. assistance), in: usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/nkreview.htm.

To improve North Korean-American relations in 1996 the USA also opened negotiations on Pyongyang's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).⁶⁹ Within the framework of these discussions the USA attempted to insist that North Korea stop producing and exporting long-range missiles (more than 300 kilometre range and 500 kilogramme payload). North Korean requests to help them with satellite development and compensate any potential export losses initially received a fairly frosty reception. Pyongyang strengthened its position when it tested a missile developed from the Russian SCUD system (the Taepo-dong 1) on 31 August 1998 and at the same time apparently attempted to launch a small satellite into space. The missile flew over Japan and due to a technical fault parts of the third stage fell into the Pacific about 4,000 kilometres from the launch site.⁷⁰ Since neither the launch nor the locations where the missile stages were expected to fall back to earth had been officially announced, this caused considerable upset especially in Japan (and to a lesser degree also in China), as North Korean ground missiles and their testing could pose a major threat to Japan for the first time. As a result Tokyo discontinued its bilateral food aid and charter flights to North Korea (for the small North Korean minority in Japan) until the end of September 1999.

In renewed senior-level bilateral negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington a temporary interim arrangement was agreed to on 24 September 1999, which was to be developed further in subsequent talks. North Korea guaranteed a long-range missile testing moratorium for the duration of negotiations, and the USA lifted some sanctions against Pyongyang in return. In negotiations the North offered a moratorium on all missile exports (including missile components, technical aid and correspondent mediation services) and on testing of missiles with a range of more than 500 kilometres. They demanded in return, however, financial compensation of one billion US dollars for food aid and lost export revenue, as well as launching installations to be made available by the Americans for the launching of their own missiles.⁷¹

The Clinton administration was prepared to agree to financial compensation of several hundred million US dollars, to be used for food aid and satellite launches, and the American president signed the joint agreement in North Korea. The USA, however, imposed additional demands. The agreement was to apply to missiles with a range of more than 300 kilometres in accordance with MTCR regulations. Furthermore Pyongyang was to declare all types and quantities of missiles falling under MTCR regulations and destroy these missiles. Rocket stocks and their disarmament were to be monitored by on-site inspections. By destroying all missiles with a range of over 300 kilometres, North Korea would no longer have been able to pose a military threat to the south of the ROK, while a range of 500 kilometres guaranteed that the whole of South Korean territory was covered.

69 See Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), p. 59.

70 Cf. Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., *The Armed Forces of North Korea* (Footnote 3), pp. 280f. North Korea has never admitted publicly to this error, but celebrated this launch as their first successful satellite launch.

71 See Randall C. Forberg, *Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory: NMD and Bush's policy Toward North Korea*, in: ACR, 9-01, p. 457.C.1-2.

Until autumn 2000 obvious progress was made. This was illustrated by the first visit of the former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Pyongyang in October 2000 and the return visit by the deputy leader of the North Korean defence council Cho Myong-nok to the US President.⁷² Due to the forthcoming American presidential elections, however, and their uncertain outcome at that time, negotiations were broken off at the end of November 2000. North Korea did not want any agreement whose implementation might be called into question by a new more conservative US president. Essentially three contentious issues still remained: the amount of financial compensation; the range of the missiles (300 or 500 kilometres); and the issue of information, inspection and destruction, on which the Clinton government might have been prepared to forego the on-site inspections, if North Korea had definitely given up further development and export of its long-range missiles.

A further important concession by Kim Jong-il both at the inter-Korean summit and during Madeleine Albright's later visit to Pyongyang was that he appeared to accept the presence of American forces on South Korean soil.⁷³ This would have removed a key obstacle from the Four Power Talks abandoned without any result in 1999 and brought the solution of a peace treaty back within reach.⁷⁴

After Bush had won the US presidential elections, initial talks in December 2000 between future Secretary of State Colin Powell, new national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and representatives of the outgoing Clinton administration made it clear that the former would not continue with the previous basis for negotiations and would adopt a tougher approach towards North Korea. Two different interests lay behind this. On the one hand people were not satisfied with North Korea's concessions to date on the issue of inspection of its nuclear installations and its long-range missiles. On the other, intensification of conflict with Pyongyang offered a welcome boost to the supporters of National Missile Defense (NMD) in the new US government. The first approach that won particular support in the American State Department was the concept of dialogue and negotiation under more stringent conditions. The second approach amounted to a permanent breaking off of dialogue with North Korea in order to be able more easily to justify their own missile defence programme in terms of domestic policy.⁷⁵ The potential

72 Cf. Nordkorea will Mißtrauen beseitigen, in: FAZ, 11 October 2001, p. 8.

73 A statement by South Korean foreign minister Han Seung-soo to a forum of South Korean journalists' organizations the Kwanhum Club on 6 September 2001 hinted that this was the case. See NK tolerates US Troop Presence here: Min. Han, 6 September 2001, in: www.korea.net/kwnews/content/xNews.asp?color=RW&Number=20010906004. As early as 1994 Kim Il-sung (Kim Jong-il's father) had acknowledged the stabilizing role of the USFK in discussion with former US President Carter. See Kim Il-sung accepted presence of US troops in Korea: Carter, 8 August 2001, in: www.korea.net/kwnews/content/xNews.asp?color=RW&Number=20010808006.

74 During his visit to Moscow in early August 2001 Kim Jong-il indirectly appeared to disassociate himself from this once more, when Russian President Putin declared Russia's support for North Korea's demands for the withdrawal of US forces. See cited above, Kim Jong-il verspricht in Moskau: Bis 2003 keine nordkoreanischen Raketentests, in: FAZ, 6 August 2001, p. 5.

75 See Nicholas D. Kristhof, The Greater Danger, in: The New York Times, 11 January 2002, in: www.nytimes.com/2002/01/11/opinion/11KRIS.html.

North Korean missile hazard served as a useful fig-leaf so as not to have to admit publicly that the missile defense programme was in fact aimed at the growing nuclear threat represented by Chinese ballistic missiles.

The South Korean defence ministry also used the US government's new tougher stance to finally win American agreement to an increase in the range permitted in the development and procurement of their own ballistic missiles. Since the North Korean missile test of August 1998, the South Korean military had been demanding an increase in range in bilateral talks with the USA, in order to be able to cover military targets throughout North Korea. To date the United States had only allowed them ballistic missiles with a range of up to 180 kilometres, so as not to impose additional problems on bilateral negotiations with North Korea on limiting their missiles. With the new missile guidelines of January 2001, the range was increased to 300 kilometres. Supporters of détente in Seoul and Washington managed to agree that this increase be linked to South Korea's participation in the MTCR.⁷⁶ In this way the previous American missile restriction policy with regard to Pyongyang was not called into question and no additional threat was posed to either Chinese or Russian territory. Since targets almost all over North Korean territory can be reached by ballistic missiles from the south, however, it should be more difficult in future negotiations to get Pyongyang to accept the MTCR's 300 kilometre range limit.

It was becoming apparent the change in US foreign policy was starting to cast doubts on the previous success of President Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy (the South Korean version of détente). The first summit meeting of North and South Korean heads of state in mid June 2000 in Pyongyang had opened up the possibility of a complete easing of tensions between the North and the South. A certain rapprochement in fundamental political conceptions was also observed. South Korea sees in the Confederation a (transitional?) element towards reunification, and North Korea is pursuing a "loose federation" in this respect.⁷⁷ Although the North was continuing to demarcate itself clearly from the South, this formula had the potential to open up more possibilities for political action than previously. Pyongyang has since desisted from making personal attacks on Kim Dae-jung and has stopped its propaganda exercises on the joint border.

Only three months later, both defence ministers met for the first time in South Korea and agreed on the demilitarization of the border for the reconstruction of a road and rail link between the South and the North and also in more general form, preparing to dismantle military tensions.⁷⁸ South Korea has in the mean time cleared away all mines and other military obstacles on its side as far as the DMZ for the planned road and rail

76 Cf. Text: State Dept. Jan. 17 on S. Korea's New Missile Guidelines, 17 January 2001, in: usembassy.state.gov/seoul/www42yb.html.

77 Cf. South-North Joint Declaration, 15 June 2000, Number 2, in: Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), p. 300. The North Korean concept makes it clear that they want at the same time to prevent reunification under South Korean terms.

78 Cf. The Joint Press Release from the First Round of the Talks between the Minister of Defense of the ROK and the Minister of the Peoples Armed Forces of the DPRK, 26 September 2000, in: Ministry of National Defense ROK, Defense White Paper 2000 (Footnote 9), p. 301.

link, while it remains unclear whether any of the relevant work has even been begun yet on the north side.

The North's hesitation was unfortunately fuelled by the change of power in Washington at the end of 2000. The new US President George W. Bush wanted to subject American foreign policy towards North Korea to a thorough review⁷⁹, which lasted until the summer. In regard to the two different approaches (taking a tougher line in negotiations versus breaking off dialogue) Bush's attitude was indecisive. On the one hand he labelled the North Korean leadership as untrustworthy on 7 March 2001 – admittedly in the presence of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung.⁸⁰ This comment seemed to further the cause of the missile defense supporters in the government. One consequence of this undiplomatic and disparaging remark was also that North Korean experts refused to take part in a seminar on military confidence building organized in Seoul by the OSCE and South Korea from 19 to 21 March 2001.⁸¹

At the same time however, Bush also indicated to Kim Dae-jung, who had hurried to Washington specifically to save his policy of *détente*, that the USA continued to be interested in Sunshine Policy and dialogue with North Korea, but that new conditions (effective verification) would apply. The new approach would however be reviewed separately, and Seoul would be consulted before the new policy was announced.⁸² South Korea was thus given a chance to influence the new criteria for dialogue.⁸³ At the beginning of May 2001 an EU delegation travelled to North Korea at the request of Kim Dae-jung, to persuade Kim Jong-il to stick to the policy of *détente* in spite of the increasingly obvious stringency in American attitudes. The North Korean leader promised that Pyongyang would extend the missile testing moratorium until 2003, but the continuation of inter-Korean dialogue would rely on the new American approach. Those in favour of dialogue in Washington were at least finally able to implement adherence to the

79 Cf. NSC Advisor Rice Addresses Missile Defense, Korea, China, Iraq, Washington File, 22 February 2001, in: usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01022262.htm.

80 Cf. Presidents Bush, Kim Discuss N. Korea Policy, North-South Dialogue, Washington File, 7 March 2001, in: usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01030762.htm. Here it is reported at first hand that US President Bush has personal reservations about Kim Jong-il, and Bush himself said, "I do have some scepticism about the leader of North Korea, but that's not going to preclude us from trying to achieve the common objective of peace".

81 Cf. OSCE, Office of the Secretary General, Section for External Co-operation, OSCE-Korea Conference 2001, "Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in Northeast Asia", Seoul, 19 to 21 March 2001 Consolidated Summary. It was originally the plan to make North Korea more closely acquainted with the idea of military confidence building at this event.

82 Only the Democrat Senators Biden and Kerry pleaded for the continuation of negotiations to limit North Korean missiles on 7 and 8 March 2001. Cf. Sen. Biden Urges U.S. Engagement with North Korea on Missiles in: usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/biden07.htm and Sen. Kerry Urges Continued Talks With Pyongyang on Missiles, in: usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/kerry07.htm.

83 During this visit Armitage gave assurance that the USA would continue to regard the Geneva Framework Agreement as the basis for its relations with North Korea. This had previously been the subject of dispute in Washington, and South Korea had rejected a change. See Remarks By U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage at the Republic of Korea Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Seoul, Korea, 9 May 2001, in: usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/easec/armitage.htm.

Geneva Framework Agreement internally. The North Korean concession was therefore expressly welcomed by the US State Department.

On 6 June US President Bush announced the new “comprehensive approach” to dialogue with North Korea. US Undersecretary of State Armitage had previously visited Seoul for consultations in May 2000.⁸⁴ The following four points were listed:

- Improved implementation of the Geneva Framework Agreement – with regard to the nuclear activities of the DPRK;
- Verifiable limitations to the North Korean missile programme;
- Ban on missile export;
- Elimination of the threatening military situation.

In parallel to this, he reaffirmed American support for reconciliation between North and South Korea, for peace on the peninsula and for greater stability in the region. If Pyongyang were to show itself receptive to these demands, the USA would expand its aid to the North, reduce sanctions and take other positive political steps.

The “comprehensive approach”, on the one hand, took up existing policy, but at the same time significantly altered the basis for business. The USA was actually demanding a modification or new negotiation of the Geneva Framework Agreement of 1994⁸⁵, to gain better inspection rights, without offering anything in return that could have compensated the reservations that had time arisen at KEDO. The same was true of the desired limitations to the North Korean missile programme, especially as the new US government was insisting much more intransigently for effective verification. Also to be considered was the demand for eliminating the (conventional) military threat, which took up and further developed the results (willingness for military confidence building) of the inter-Korean summit and the first meeting of both Korean defence ministers. Only then would the USA be prepared to give economic aid.

Bush’s proposal of dialogue almost amounted to a request for capitulation addressed to Pyongyang. North Korea was supposed to make its only power factor, its military strength, available first and then receive aid from the USA. In Pyongyang, this idea was greeted by anything but enthusiasm, and was subsequently turned down.⁸⁶ At the same

84 Cf. Bush Statement on Undertaking Talks with North Korea, Washington File, 6 June 2001, in: usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01060700.htm.

85 For more detail see Larry A. Niksch, North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program, updated 6 December 2001, CRS Issues Brief for Congress, CRS, Washington D.C. 2001, p. 12.

86 On 18 June the spokesman for the North Korean foreign ministry said among other things, “By those topics of discussion it means the so called nuclear, missile and conventional armed forces-related issues of the DPRK. We cannot construe this otherwise than an attempt of the U.S. to disarm the DPRK through negotiations. Such attitude of the U.S. as putting up conditions which the DPRK can never accept cannot but arouse an apprehension and doubt as to whether the U.S. intends to have a dialogue with sincerity and has a willingness to settle the issues through dialogue. It is the universally recognized elementary requirement that dialogue between sovereign states should be conducted on a fair and equal footing. In this sense, we cannot but interpret the U.S. administration’s “proposal for resuming dialogue” as unilateral and conditional in its nature and hostile in its intention.” Quoted from the KCNA’s

time, by increasingly refusing to cooperate with South Korea (no date for the new South-North summit, postponement and obstruction of the bilateral ministerial talks, delaying new family reunions between South and North, no start made on building work for the South-North road and rail link) to persuade those in favour of détente in Seoul to convert the US government to the Clinton approach once more. This was too much of a challenge, however, for the political influence that South Korea was able to bring in the USA. The attempt was therefore unsuccessful, as revealed by the failed 6th South-North Ministerial Talks in November 2001 at the latest.

Only a few days after Bush's statement to North Korea, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly of the State Department elucidated the Bush government's new "comprehensive approach" to the House of Representatives' sub-committee for international relations in East Asia and the Pacific. His five guiding principles clearly differed from the president's statement in places and placed stronger emphasis on the nature of dialogue.⁸⁷

The first principle he emphasized was American support for Kim Dae-jung's policy of reconciliation. North and South Korea should initially sort out their bilateral problems on their own. This included the reduction of military tension between them. South Korea was granted a political title role in bilateral relations with the North, to which the USA would also subordinate itself.⁸⁸ Secondly, the United States stood by its commitments in the Geneva Framework Agreement of 1994, and intended to use this as the basis for (much less strongly formulated than in Bush's statement) looking into ways of implementing it better, firstly with the contracting parties and then with Pyongyang. Thirdly, the demands for a moratorium on developing and a ban on exporting long-range North Korean missiles are likewise much more diplomatically formulated. In the domain of stationing conventional forces, new measures should be taken in an attempt to reduce tension. Fourthly the principle of effective verification is also underlined for each agreement. Finally, the last principle is the trilateral agreement on North Korean policy between the USA, the ROK and Japan within the framework of the first Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) set up in April 1999. Following this, representatives

statement, 18 June 2001, in: U.S.'s proposal for resuming talks unilateral conditional and hostile: DPRK FM – DPRK urges U.S. to put compensation for electricity losses on primacy agenda, www.korea-np.co.jp/pk/162_issue/2001062103.htm.

87 Cf. Kelly's June 12 testimony to East Asia/Pacific panel: Bush Comprehensive Approach to North Korea Explained, Washington File, 12 June 2001, in: usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01061200.htm.

88 An American concession to the South Korean government is apparent here, which was supposed to encourage it to accept the new American approach. Despite this concession, US Ambassador Hubbard commented on 23 October 2001 on Bush's demand for the elimination of military threat and in so doing once again disregarded the competence of the ROK. See U.S. Ambassador Hubbard speaks on issues at the Seoul Press Club, 23 October 2001, in: www.korea.net/kwnnews/content/xNews.asp?color=RW&Number=20011023013.

of the US government indicated frequently that they would be prepared to enter into discussions with Pyongyang without any preconditions.⁸⁹

In reality, however, it was clear to all those concerned that new conditions applied. As the government of a democratic super-power, the new administration was no longer willing to subject itself to the maverick strategies of a small Stalinist-Communist regime, but preferred to act from a position of strength. The differences between the statements by Bush and Kelly, and the breadth of the principles laid down by Kelly made it clear that there was still no consensus of direction in North Korean policy in spite of the new "comprehensive approach".

Events after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 led to a worsening of the situation. A visit by Bush to Seoul originally planned for autumn 2001 was cancelled due to lack of time. Instead, conservative powers in the USA and South Korea used the goodwill of the moment to put their military forces onto alert to deter possible terrorist attacks, although policing measures would have been sufficient. In addition, the USA transferred 24 F-15 fighter jets to South Korea that were as a priority to replace the US aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* stationed in Japan (Okinawa), which in turn was sent to the Arabian Sea for the operation "Enduring Freedom". This raises the question why the alternative stationing was not in Japan. Even if this was officially disputed by the American and South Korean defence ministries, this placed Pyongyang under further pressure. Supposedly the reduced protection for its own delegation in South Korea the last bilateral ministerial talks were only allowed to be held in North Korea. In addition the comments made by John Bolton, new leader of the arms control bureau in the US State Department, have to be taken into consideration. In front of the Geneva disarmament committee he publicly named North Korea as one of two countries that was producing and stockpiling biological weapons, in contravention of the biological weapons convention.⁹⁰ He later also named North Korea expressly as one of the countries that is breaking the Non-Proliferation Treaty.⁹¹

With the collapse of the inter-Korean ministerial talks, which ended without a result in November 2001 in spite of a two-day extension, North Korea is faced with a fork in the road. It must now decide whether to seek a compromise with the détente politicians in

89 See Statement by Charles L. Pritchard, Special Envoy for negotiations with the DPRK and KEDO, before the House International Relations Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific of 26 July 2001: North Korea's Missile Program Is a Top U.S. Concern: U.S. special envoy calls it "extremely destabilizing", in: usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01072604.htm.

90 Cf. Statement of The Honorable John R. Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, United States Department of State to the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention Geneva, Switzerland, 19 November 2001, in: usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01111902.htm. John R. Bolton is a firm supporter of the American missile defence programme. Interestingly, on the same day the South Korean defence minister voiced the same accusations. Cf. Shim Jae Hoon, Seoul concern over North's biochemical stockpile, in: *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 5 December 2001, p. 6.

91 Statement of The Honorable John R. Bolton, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, United States Department of State to the Conference on Disarmament, 24 January 2002, in: www.state.gov/t/us/rm/2002/7434.htm.

Seoul and pragmatics in Washington that are willing to engage in dialogue, in spite of the worsening of the outline conditions, or whether to return to its confrontational course. This decision is becoming all the more urgent as there are presidential elections due in South Korea in December 2002 and local elections in the middle of the year, and in the face of the growing domestic criticism of the Sunshine Policy, a renewed confrontational course would hinder the election of a moderate successor to Kim Dae-jung. A conservative led government such as one led by South Korean Opposition Leader of the Great National Party Lee Hoi-chang would considerably increase the costs of the cooperation.⁹² On the other hand, with improved offers of cooperation, Kim Jong-il could strengthen the détente politicians in South Korea and the pragmatics in Washington willing to engage in dialogue.

During and after the inter-Korean ministerial talks, Pyongyang signalled further limited concessions. In the IAEA it offered an additional visit⁹³ in early November 2001 to a nuclear installation (isotope laboratory) in Yongbyon that it had not previously been opened for visits, and wanted to enter into two UN conventions against terrorism. In December 2001 it indirectly announced the signing of a further five UN conventions against terrorism.⁹⁴ In talks with European politicians, senior-level North Korean politicians emphasized their willingness to enter into dialogue with the USA and showed an increased interest on the bilateral level in issues of military confidence building and conventional arms control.⁹⁵ They hinted at a willingness to put a moratorium on exports of long-range missiles. At the same time, reopening dialogue was linked with the demand that Washington and Seoul should finally end the unjustified state of alarm of their forces in South Korea. This demand was met by the South Korean forces at least on 21 December 2001.⁹⁶

There were indications that the US State Department would also reopen itself more wholeheartedly to dialogue. On 10 January 2002, the USA sought contact with North Korea again at UN level for the first time in seven months.⁹⁷ A CIA report published on 11 January 2002 concluded that the main threat to the USA was no longer posed by long-

92 See cited above, N. Korea calls presidential aspirant 'scum', in: The New York Times, 21 January 2002 in: www.nytimes.com/reuters/world/international-korea-north.html.

93 Cf. Vanessa Gera, UN to Visit N. Korea Nuclear Site, in: The Washington Post of 7 January 2002, in: www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A8668-2002Jan7.

94 See Shim Jae-yun, N. Korea willing to sign five more Anti-Terror Pacts, in: The Korean Times, 10 December 2001, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/times/200112/t2001121016564740110.htm. On their visit to Pyongyang in November 2001 EU representatives strongly urged further steps to combat terrorism.

95 Cf. such as for example in a bilateral seminar carried out by the German Foreign Ministry with North Korean government experts on military confidence building from 26 to 30 November 2001 in Berlin and Geilenkirchen.

96 See Hwang Jang-jin, Seoul lifts security alert, paving way for S-N talks, in: The Korean Herald, 22 December 2001, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2001/12/22/200112220040.asp. In parallel to this the USA also withdrew its 24 F-15 fighter jets from South Korea. The state of emergency standby of the USFK remained untouched by this however.

97 Cf. Shim Jae-yun, NK, US hold first talks in 7 months in New York, in: The Korean Times, 11 January 2002, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/times/200201/t2002011118000440110.htm.

range missiles, but by commercial means of transport (ships, aircraft, heavy ground vehicles) that could be used by terrorist groups.⁹⁸ At the same time, the White House had scheduled the US President's visit to Seoul that had to be caught up for the 19 and 20 February 2002. Bush was also visiting Tokyo and Beijing. South Korean Foreign Minister Han travelled beforehand to Washington, Moscow, Beijing and Tokyo.⁹⁹ The USA evidently appeared prepared for greater political flexibility towards North Korea, the extent to which remained open.

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung attached continuation of the inter-Korean dialogue to five objectives in his New Year's Address on 14 January 2002:

1. Reopening the Seoul-Sinuiju rail link;
2. Construction of a large industrial park in the North Korean city of Kaesong;
3. Opening of land access for visitors to the North Korean mountain Mt. Kumgang¹⁰⁰;
4. Continuing of family reunions for those separated since the Korean War;
5. Building of military confidence.

At the same time, he asked the US government to make it possible for the North Korean government to return to the negotiating table without losing face.¹⁰¹ The South Korean president made it clear once again that in contrast to the US approach, his primary concern was economic and humanitarian measures in order to strengthen supporters of economic reform in North Korea. They should be followed by steps to build confidence – as agreed bilaterally at the summit – and not, as demanded by Bush, measures to reduce the threat. The discrepancies between the new US approach and the South Korean programme persisted.

98 Cf. CIA (publ.), *Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat Through 2015*, Unclassified Summary of a National Intelligence Estimate, Washington D.C. December 2001, in: www.cia.gov/nic/pubs/other_products/Unclassifiedballisticmissilefinal.htm.

99 Cf. Kim Ji-ho, *Korea plans series of talks with 4 powers this month*, in: *The Korean Herald*, 12 January 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/01/12/200201120040.asp.

100 North Korea has opened access to this mountain attraction, which is of interest to tourists, since 1998. Travel to and from it is however only possible via a time-wasting water route and the fares calculated by Pyongyang are high. More than 430,000 visitors have made use of the offer, but their numbers have noticeably dropped in recent years and the South Korean operating company is faced with growing losses.

101 See Kim Ji-ho, *President Kim sets five inter-Korean projects as goals*, in: *The Korean Herald*, 15 January 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/01/15/200201150008.asp; likewise Yoo Jae-suk, *S. Korean President Urges Dialogue*, in: *The Washington Post*, 15 January 2002, in: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A41259-2002Jan14.html. Word for word Kim Dae-jung said, "To reopen talks with North Korea, I think the United States needs to assume a posture that will save face for the North." In parallel to this senior-level South Korean government officials have made it clear that they do not want any comments by Bush that will do any more harm to dialogue with North Korea. Cf. among others, *Bush's Tough Policy Toward NK Causes Dispute in South*: NYT, in: *The Korea Times*, 20 January 2002, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/kt_nation/200201/t2002012017383641110.htm.

At the meeting of the TCOG on 25 January in Seoul, the US State Department appeared to be prepared to fit in more with South Korean conditions.¹⁰² Only a few days later, however, President Bush cast renewed doubt on this rapprochement to the South Korean Sunshine Policy in his State of the Union address of 29 January 2002, when he referred to North Korea along with Iraq and Iran as constituting an “axis of evil” and made a change in paradigms in the fight against international terrorism.¹⁰³ These should now extend to the states of concern, from which the greatest danger came of producing and distributing weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles. Bush appeared for the first time to be totally on the side of the conservative unilateralists. The categorization of three completely different states as constituting an “axis of evil” met with global disapproval. The press secretaries of the White House (Ari Fleischer) and the State Department (Richard Boucher) therefore subsequently played down the significance of this term, by pointing out that there were no military activities being planned and that the US government continued to be prepared to talk to Pyongyang any place any time on any topic without any preconditions.¹⁰⁴ The hard-liners in Washington had set the agenda, however, and once again had done considerable damage to the policy of détente on the Korean peninsula just as it had restarted.

South Korea’s president made this clear, when he pointed out that it was now a question of the Korean peninsula ensuring that the growing tensions between the USA and the DPRK did not lead to war.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, Seoul began making concerted efforts to pick up the thread of the discussions with the powers in Washington willing to engage in dialogue, which had been badly disrupted in the interim. A South Korean-American alliance had to be forged between the supporters of dialogue in North America and the détente politicians in South Korea, so as to prevent the hard-liners in the USA from making use of the change in paradigms announced by Bush to disrupt inter-Korean relations and obstruct the resumption of the dialogue between the USA and North Korea. Kim Dae-jung had to be persuaded to act on the demands of the hard-liners in Washington.

102 See ROK, US, Japan urge NK to Resume Dialogue, Koreanet of 25 January 2002, in: www.korea.net/knews/content/xNews.asp?color=RW&Number=20020125012. At this meeting, where conventional arms control issues were under discussion, there was on this occasion no joint statement. A participant was quoted as saying, “I am not supposed to comment on the details discussed during the meeting as the participants agreed not to do so, but there has been some change in the U.S. position toward the North.”

103 Cf. President Bush’s State of the Union Address of 29 January 2002, in: usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl?p=/products/washfile/latest&f=02012950.tlt&t=/products/washfile/newsitem.html.

104 See by way of example Daily Press Briefing, Richard Boucher, Spokesman, Washington DC, of 30 January 2002, in: www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2002/7704.htm. This moderating behaviour by the Bush administration, indicating willingness to enter into renewed dialogue, was greeted by sharp criticism by conservative unilateralists. See Frank J. Gaffney Jr., Suddenly Spinning on the “evils axis”, in: *The Washington Times*, 5 February 2002, in: www.washtimes.com/commentary/20020205-76546209.htm.

105 See Shin Yong-bae, U.S.-N.K. tension should not undermine peace: Kim, in: *The Korea Herald*, 5 February 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/02/05/200202050068.asp.

At the same time the West European envoys in Pyongyang were trying to stop the North Korean government from overreacting.¹⁰⁶ In spite of all the critical rhetoric from its own hard-liners, North Korea behaved in a constructive way when its UN envoy in New York said on 7 February 2002, "Nice words will be answered with nice words."¹⁰⁷ The supporters of economic modernization in Pyongyang stressed that they were willing to engage in dialogue with the USA despite Bush's harsh words and that they were now hoping for a constructive response during his visit to Seoul.

Bush's trip to Seoul from 19 to 21 February was very symbolically structured and in part aimed at the people back home. After his State of the Union Address on 29 January the US President made renewed efforts to move closer to supporters of dialogue, without giving up his support for conservative unilateralists. On the one hand, in the joint press conference during his visit to the new railway station at Dorasan, which has yet to be connected to the North Korean rail network, he invited the leadership of the DPRK to engage in dialogue with no preconditions and indicated that there were no plans at all for a military invasion.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the USA would continue with its humanitarian aid to the needy North Korean people, independently of the dialogue issue. He renounced his demand that conventional forces be dismantled soon. In return, however, he criticized the North Korean system of rule and its leader Kim Jong-il once again, and in doing so, weakened how seriously he was offering to engage in dialogue, despite the fact that during his subsequent visit to China, he asked the Chinese President Ziang Zemin to transmit his request for dialogue to Pyongyang again.

At the same time, Kim Dae-jung and Bush had come to a basic agreement about topics for dialogue with North Korea, which should extend to the problems of weapons of mass destruction and the missile issue. They were still not in agreement, however, over the details. For this reason, a joint working party had been set up in the mean time to settle the differences regards to content and develop a joint negotiating strategy.¹⁰⁹ Shortly after the summit a group of American and South Korean defence experts completed a joint study on military confidence building and arms control.¹¹⁰ In it, the American experts fall in with the South Korean approach to begin military confidence building first. It contains

106 Cf. British envoy says U.S. stance puzzles North Korea, Reuters, 7 February 2002, in: [www.Asia.news.yahoo.com/020207/reuters asia-88362.html](http://www.Asia.news.yahoo.com/020207/reuters%20asia-88362.html).

107 Cited from Edith M. Leder, North Korea Envoy says U.S. must decide if it wants dialogue or hostile relations with Pyongyang, in: *The Boston Globe*, 8 February 2002, in: www.boston.com/dailynews/038/world/North_Korean_envoy_says_U_S_mu:.shtml.

108 See President Bush Visits Demilitarized Zone, Remarks by the President at Dorasan Train Station, 20 February 2002, in: usembassy.state.gov/seoul/www43am.html. Likewise, Remarks by President Bush and President Kim Dae-jung in Press availability, The Blue House Seoul, 20 February 2002, in: usembassy.state.gov/seoul/www43ak.html.

109 Cf. Hwang Jang-jin, S. Korea, U.S. to develop strategy on North's weapons, in: *The Korean Herald*, 5 March 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/03/05/200203050062.asp.

110 See Sohn Suk-joo, ROK, US Move to Tackle Conventional Weapons, in: *The Korea Times*, 27 February 2002, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/kt_nation/200202/t2002022717471641110.htm.

a comprehensive list of both sides' proposals on which the necessary consensus has yet to be reached within and between both governments.

North Korea reacted strongly to the renewed criticism of its political system and scepticism of its leader and was initially unwilling to accept the offer of joint dialogue by Kim Dae-jung and Bush immediately. In the North Korean Foreign Ministry's reply of 22 February, a small loophole was left open.¹¹¹ Furthermore, they had so far resisted making any criticism of the South Korean government, which suggested that they wanted to pick up the thread of discussion again soon. During the visit by Kim Dae-jung's personal security adviser to Pyongyang in April 2002, he was able to persuade Kim Jong-il that it was better to pick up the thread of discussion with the USA again now and revive the North-South dialogue, in order to improve the electoral chances of presidential candidate Roh Moo-hyun of the Democratic Millennium Party, who had good prospects.¹¹² On 27 April, 2002 North Korea declared itself ready to resume direct contact with the USA.¹¹³ As a result, the conservative hard-liners and supporters of dialogue in the USA were forced to agree on a joint proposal for talks to the North Korean government. Since they had clearly not managed this by the meeting of the TCOG¹¹⁴ on 18 June, the final decision on the matter would now appear to fall to the US President. The South Korean President therefore sent a confidant to Washington, to persuade the hawks in the US government to adopt as constructive an approach as possible. Even if the bilateral talks were to begin with the dispatching of a senior American emissary to Pyongyang, rapid and far-reaching progress can hardly be counted upon.

The process of South Korean-American rapprochement only began at the last summit, and people in the USA will certainly want to wait for the outcome of the presidential elections in Seoul on 18 December 2002, before they commit themselves to a joint strategy for dialogue. Nonetheless, Kim Dae-jung has succeeded in moving North Korea a little bit away from the "axis of evil" and making it a test case for a political solution.

111 At one point it reads as follows: "Bush's outbursts against the DPRK system are an insult to the national feelings of the Korean people based on its system and *little short of declaring denial of dialogue* (emphasis added) with the DPRK." Cited from, DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman on Bush's slanders, KCNA, 22 February 2002, in: www.kcna.co.jp/item/2002/200202/news02/22.htm#8.

112 See Kim Hyung-jin, Parties spar over Lim's N.K. visit, in: The Korean Herald, 10 April 2002, in: http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/04/10/200204100050.asp. Roh – a representative of Korea's young generation – has since been acknowledged as being the presidential candidate with the best prospects of succeeding Kim Dae-jung. He wants to continue the Sunshine Policy. See John Barry Kitch, Candidate of Kim's party in tough race, in: The Japan Times, 26 May 2002, in: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?eo20020526a2.htm>.

113 See Shim Jae-yun, NK, US Preparing to Resume Dialogue, in: The Korean Times, 1 May 2002, in: http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/kt_nation/200205/t2002050117242241110.htm.

114 See Joint Statement by the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group, 18 June 2002, in: U.S. State Department, Text: New Opportunity Arises to Improve Relations with N. Korea, in: <http://usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl?p=/products/washfile/geog/ea&f=02061801.eea&t=/products/washfile/newsitem.shtml> and Oh Young-jin, Lim Looks to US for Positive Move in North Korea, The Korea Times, 20 June 2002, in: http://www.hankooki.com/kt_nation/200206/t2002062018071841110.htm. The Korean President dispatched a special emissary Yim Sung-joon, to back up the supporters of dialogue in Washington in formulating the American proposal of dialogue to North Korea.

3.2. Discussion of the various approaches

Two approaches can be distinguished between the USA and South Korea, which can be reviewed with regard to their advantages and disadvantages. The present US government wants to begin from a strong position initially with arms control and disarmament measures and is then only willing to provide further economic aid if the appropriate good behaviour is forthcoming. They were partially confirmed in this approach by earlier North Korean behaviour.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, the South Korean government ranks economic development first and wants to support the economic modernizers in North Korea as a priority. They hope that it will then be easier for North Korea to get involved in a process of military confidence building and arms control from a position of economic stability.

From Pyongyang's point of view, the new American approach amounts to robbing it of its strongest negotiating trump cards (potential for military aggression), and making it dependent on the economic support of western democracies. This programme casts doubt on the leadership of the Communist Party from the very start. A prescription of this kind more or less backs the collapse of the existing state apparatus and aims to bankrupt the ruling elite. In its radicality, it strengthens the hard-liners and traditional power structure in Pyongyang and discourages the forces for economic reform which are currently weak. It nourishes the feelings of being under threat harboured by the predominantly military elite and will increase the attraction of developing weapons of mass destruction and their associated carriers. In this way, the very threat is created that it was intended to prevent.

Furthermore, North Korea is supposed to bear the economic and social costs of dismantling their military forces in a situation of economic weakness. During the transition period, this might lead to considerable internal political instability, which would make reunification more likely. The costs of reunification and transformation, however, would then be particularly high for Seoul.

The advantage of this approach for the USA and Seoul largely lies in being able to eliminate the immediate military threat quickly and drastically weaken the military power structure. The US government is backing a programme that has already proved its worth against the Soviet Union. Admittedly, the initiative at that time was taken by Gorbachev and his foreign minister Shevardnadze and not by western countries. Gorbachev was looking to work together with western governments to strip his country's own military machine of power, which was standing in the way of necessary economic reforms. This only succeeded, however, because there were many officers in the army who supported the course of reform, and because years of dialogue with western countries had resulted in their perceiving confidence building and arms control to be a sensible, reliable control tool. Also to be considered is the close intervention of the CSCE which provided a stabilizing framework for this process and levelled out extreme political factors on both sides.

115 For more detail see, Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington D.C. 1999 and Chuck Downs, *Over the Line*, AEI Press, Washington D.C. 1999.

In view of Russia's later experiences with it, however, North Korea's political leadership rejected this programme. The fact that was overlooked was that Gorbachev was already dependent in 1990 on massive amounts of aid from abroad for achieving his goals (NATO special summit mid 1990) and for politically surviving the KPdSU party conference. Dependency of this kind is hardly compatible with the North Korean Juche ideology. The necessary confidence and broad scope of dialogue scarcely exist between North and South Korea and is not present at all between Washington and Pyongyang. In contrast to Germany, both parts of Korea had waged a savage war against each other and the war generation stamped by mutual mistrust still holds the reins of political power. Furthermore the forces for reform that would open an opportunity for such a change still seem to be largely lacking in the North Korean military machine. There is no regional framework for security policy that would lay this process and make it easier. The conservative hard-liners and unilateralists in the USA must therefore lay themselves open to the question of which peaceful means they intend to convince the reluctant political and military elite in North Korea of the value of their programme, or whether they are not quite consciously steering them towards an isolation along the lines of Cuba or Iraq.

What of the Chinese approach to modernization, offers it a better way? In 2000, Kim Jong-il made two visits to China to gather detailed information about their reform programme of economic liberalization and development. It is doubtful, however, whether the Chinese programme could be transferred to North Korea as it is. The main difference lies in the influence of the military. Deng Xiaoping did not need to take the military into any particular consideration in his economic reforms, because it did not play such an important role in China as it does in North Korea, and because the international surroundings are less threatening to a country with the world's largest population and the process of reform was carried out during a period of international détente.

In contrast, the military is the strongest economic factor in North Korea and the question arises how civil economic development can be encouraged under such conditions, without at the same time starting to reduce the importance of the dominant military economic sector. Arms controls would certainly offer the necessary tools, because mutual disarmament can be carried out in such a way that a minimum level of security is largely preserved for all those concerned. The decisive internal political issue is that the social groups behind the economic military machine will then lose power, money and influence. They will put up a fight against this loss of power and in so doing they are able to act from a position of strength and they possess the necessary tools to destroy the process of political détente at any time with military pinpricks. A good example for this can be seen in the naval skirmish between North Korean and South Korean combat ships in the West Sea on 29 June 2002, which the hardliners in Pyongyang have used to increase the costs of starting the dialogue with the USA.

Vietnam is also under discussion in Seoul as an educational political example, because its Communist leadership has begun to open itself to western countries and modernize its economy since the early 1990s. South Korea is attempting to win over the Vietnamese

government to promote economic modernization in bilateral relations with the DPRK, but like China, without the Communist Party losing their political and social control.¹¹⁶

In contrast to the US government, Kim Dae-jung backs with his Sunshine Policy economic and humanitarian development as a priority. He aims to reduce the costs of reunification in the middle and long term. Any form of economic development in North Korea will contribute towards this.¹¹⁷ In the long term the supporters of political détente hope to achieve economic and political liberalization of the DPRK, which has recently also introduced and encouraged processes of democratization. Establishing a permanent humanitarian dialogue is useful for transferring corresponding standards. The EU firmly supports these efforts in its own dialogue with Pyongyang.¹¹⁸ A gradually expanding civilian economic sector will be placed beside the economic sector dominated by the military as a counterbalance, while supporters of an “economy first policy” try to gain some ground in North Korea.¹¹⁹ This would make it easier for the North Korean leadership to dismantle the primacy of the military sector. During the transition period internal political instabilities would be less serious than those engendered by the American approach.

Seoul’s economic aid to Pyongyang is not only a gift, but also simultaneously creates new dependencies for the North that South Korea can cautiously use to induce further economic and political change. North Korea’s political elite is aware of these dependencies. In keeping with the Juche ideology, it is trying to escape them by broadening and strengthening its economic relations with Europe and Asia. On top of that, it can try to use economic aid almost exclusively for military armament measures. In order to prevent this a mutual exchange of information on the economic aid programme of the main donor countries and multilateral coordination of their policies would be necessary. This would, however, be thorn in the flesh of conservative unilateralists in Washington, as they would no longer be the only ones determining the agenda of security policy.

South Korea has to date made efforts on a bilateral level to combine this with a process of military confidence building. The military threat is perceived somewhat differently in

116 Cf. Rodger Baker, Seoul’s arms sales to Hanoi takes aim, in: *The Washington Times*, 25 January 2002, in: www.washtimes.com/world/20020125-28623073.htm. The Vietnamese President travelled to Pyongyang in May 2002. Vietnam also sets a good example in another way: in 1992 it had already opened diplomatic relations with South Korea (although South Korean soldiers had fought on the side of US forces in the Vietnam War, and although this was greeted by North Korea with a year-long freeze in bilateral relations) and after the resumption of diplomatic relations with the USA in 1995 until the conclusion of the trade agreement of July 2000 (ratified by US Congress in October 2001) managed to maintain largely normal relations (right down to human rights issues) with the United States.

117 These points are particularly emphasized by Ronald Meinardus. See Ronald Meinardus, Unification German lessons for Korea, in: *The Japan Times*, 24 November 2001, in: www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?eo20011124rm.htm.

118 Cf. North Korea: European Commission Approves Cooperation Strategy (Country Strategy Paper 2001–2004); in: europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/north_korea/intro/index.htm.

119 See the comments by the South Korean Defence Minister Hong Soon-joung during his visit to Europe. See cited above, Hong says NK hawks may be obstructing S-N Dialog, in: *The Korean Times*, 4 December 2001, in: www.koreatimes.co.kr/kt_nation/200112/t2001120417004841110.htm.

Seoul than in Washington. In South Korea people feel threatened primarily by the troops assembled for a surprise attack, the long-range artillery pieces located near the border (hostage role played by the region of Seoul), the special forces of the North Korean People's Army and their growing efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction, and less by their long-range ballistic missiles. In Washington in spite of the presence of the USFK, the impression is rather the reverse. This is made apparent by the new "comprehensive approach". Furthermore, South Korea's own forces, in league with the USA, are now considered to be so strong that any danger is not seen as immediate. The North Korean government would herald the end of its rule if it were to embark upon an unprovoked war.¹²⁰ Therefore there is time available and a long-term process of military confidence building gains more backing.

The South Korean programme doubtless accommodates the interests of the North Korean government better, and it would also appear to be compatible with its long-term goal of a confederation. A disadvantage for North Korea is that the American forces stationed in South Korea are still not included in the CSBMs. The programme, however, also includes disadvantages for South Korea. The existing military insecurities and disparities will not be eliminated until later, rather than immediately. This makes it more difficult for a democratic government to see the programme through, as it gives the opposition welcome arguments for stopping economic aid and provides a change in power. The problem is intensified by the fact that in North Korea, the economic sector is pre-eminently dominated by the military. Economic aid and foreign exchange revenue find their way first into this sector and only when there is no further use it is then made available to the civilian economy. This practice supplies the South Korean opposition and conservative hard-liners in Washington with more arguments and furthers the collapse of Kim Dae-jung's strategy.¹²¹

Democratic governments can only see such strategies through effecting if non-democratic governments cooperate at least in a limited way and make minimal efforts in return to prevent an internal political collapse. Conversely, non-democratic countries need assistance from democracies in order to be able to justify their efforts internally and maintain them. Since governments and their associated approaches to foreign policy change more frequently in democracies, non-democratic countries are in some circumstances faced with considerable difficulties in adapting themselves.

120 For example, the US Commander of the USFK General Schwartz declared the following before the defence sub-committee of the approval committee in the House of Representatives on 8 March 2001, "Our combined forces can fight and win today if called upon. Our power, might, and daily readiness are unparalleled. (...) If necessary, this unequalled combined combat power and might can defeat a North Korean attack and destroy its military and regime. It is this power and might that strengthens our deterrence mission and ultimately provides regional security." Quoted from: Statement of General Thomas A. Schwartz (Footnote 1), pp. 9f.

121 See by way of example the comments made by the South Korean Opposition leader Lee Hoo-chang during his visit to Washington on 23 January 2002. Cf. David R. Sands, Lee vows to work with North Korea, in: *The Washington Times*, 24 January 2002, in: www.Washtimes.com/world/20020124-20185276.htm.

Since Bush came into office North Korea has been faced not only with a change in American foreign policy, but also more importantly with a clear increase in how stringent their conditions are. In order to meet the resulting costs, Pyongyang has tried during the past year to raise the costs of cooperation for Seoul. In this way, it aimed to offset the anticipated supplementary costs of cooperating with the USA. At the same time the South Korean government had to persuade the United States once more to make their conditions less stringent. A positive factor in all this is that North Korea this time abstained from any wildcat strategies (e.g. testing a new missile) against the USA. This would only have strengthened the wrong political forces in Washington.

This must have had the effect of a double punishment, however, on the South Korean government. The conservative hard-liners in both the USA and North Korea were now putting it under the pressure of additional demands for cooperation. Kim Dae-jung was not able to keep this game up for long. He came more and more easily under attack from the opposition forces, and public support for the Sunshine Policy threatened to dwindle away. He was unable to prevent his own troops from going on alert after 11 September 2001, and in the same month he had to replace his unification minister Lim Dong-won, the architect of the Korean policy of *détente*, with Hong Soon-jong, who tended to espouse the opinions of the opposition. To put an end to this game, he allowed the 6th ministerial talks with Pyongyang in mid November 2001 to break down. With this, Kim Jong-il missed his chance to reward the forces ready for *détente* in South Korea with additional profits from cooperating, to make it clear that the hard-liners in Washington, the South Korean opposition and the ROK's defence ministry were backing the wrong strategy.

The break-down in ministerial talks meant that all sides had reached a critical point. The North Korean government now had to choose between cooperation and confrontation. If it continued to keep the costs of cooperating high for Kim Dae-jung, this could spell the end for the Sunshine Policy, and to supplementary economic and humanitarian benefits for its own regime, because it would fuel the electoral chances of conservative opposition leader Lee for the presidential elections in December 2002 in South Korea. Since Lee supports the Bush approach, the swing to the US line would result in a further increase to the costs of cooperating. In addition to this, there is the growing risk of being put on the list of countries that foster terrorism by conservative hard-liners in the USA, which warrants military actions. North Korea attempted to counter this by announcing its agreement with the UN conventions against terrorism, thus signalling increased willingness to cooperate to the USA. In spite of South Korean recommendation, however, they delayed joining the political alliance against international terrorism like China and Russia.

Recent developments on the Korean peninsula show that Kim Jong-il seems prepared to reduce the costs of cooperating, but it remains to be seen by how much. For his part, Kim Dae-jung has used a corruption scandal in his government to replace his conservative unification minister Hong Soon-jong, appointed in the interim, with *détente* supporter

Jeong Se-hyun and in so doing improving the conditions for cooperation on his part.¹²² At any rate the North Korean leader can be purported to having had something to do with the election of a new South Korean president who will continue the policy of détente. Finally, there are important talks on the agenda in 2003 at the latest over the adaptation of the KEDO project, which looks like going on for some time, and the supply situation of its own people is hardly likely to improve drastically.

The fragile nature of the dialogue that has only just been set in motion again can only be overcome if the economic modernizers in North Korea, the détente politicians in Seoul and the supporters of dialogue in Washington continue to draw closer to one another in their perspectives. Without economic development, North Korea is hardly going to disarm, and without disarmament there are few prospects for the economic development of North Korea. Whether this rapprochement will be broad enough to withstand the pressure of attempts to disrupt it by military opponents of détente in Pyongyang, conservative unilateralists in the USA and opposition forces in South Korea remains to be seen. Furthermore, the outcome of the presidential elections in Seoul at the end of 2002 and probably that of the American presidential elections at the end of 2004 will have to be awaited before a more permanent dialogue has a better chance. This period should be used to strengthen the economic reform faction in North Korea and further plumb the possibilities for military confidence building and arms control between the three countries.

3.3. Options for military confidence building and arms control on the Korean peninsula

The point of departure for all activities to do with military confidence building and arms control in the area of conventional forces is provided by the Cease-fire Agreement of 1953, the Basic Agreement of 1991 and the General Agreement of 1994. With regard to security policy there is no distinction between these efforts and those to push through renunciation of military weapons of mass destruction and MTCR restrictions on the Korean peninsula. In the end, North Korea will have to stand by its promise not to possess any nuclear weapons and respect its commitments from the biological weapons convention. The fact that it has not been possible to check for adherence to the biological weapons convention so far, because the conservative unilateralists in the USA allowed the conclusion of negotiations of a verification protocol in Geneva to break down. In the longer term, North Korea is required to join the chemical weapons convention, as there is no other way of guaranteeing complete abstinence from weapons of mass destruction.

The representation of the conventional military situation and of the military mutual assistance pacts in the region also shows that the military forces of China and Russia

122 Cf. Kim Ji-ho, Replacement of unification minister raises hope for reopening talks with N. Korea, in: The Korea Herald, 30 January 2002, in: www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/01/30/200201300056.asp.

should be included, in some form, in the process of military confidence building at least. Japan is a special case, as there is no defence cooperation treaty with either the North or South Korea, and for historical reasons this is not very likely. It is, however, bilaterally linked with the USA in military terms and maintains important military bases on its territory, from which the South Korean forces and the USFK could be supported and reinforced in the event of a crisis or need for defence. Furthermore, as a democratic country in league with the USA, it would hardly be able to remain neutral in the event of a crisis. Also to be considered in regards to Japan's air and sea forces, is the increasing capability to project power. For these reasons, it would be desirable to include Japan in a programme of regional, but not necessarily multilateral military confidence building. Tokyo already maintains bilateral contacts for military confidence building with China and South Korea, which should be developed further and extended to North Korea. When Japan assigned part of its sea forces to the Operation "Enduring Freedom", Japanese Minister-President Koizumi travelled in advance to Seoul and Beijing, to allay concerns regarding security policy. Such efforts can be extended to Pyongyang under a more cooperative environment.

Basically China, Russia and Japan are not willing to get involved with arms control measures on the Korean peninsula, however, because they do not consider themselves to be part of the security policy problem. China is also striving to modernize its forces in the long term and does not want to have any regional restrictions placed upon it.¹²³ In view of the bleak situation of its forces and the uncertain future of Sino-Russian relations in Siberia and the Russian Far East, Russia sees no necessity for new regional restrictions. It will, therefore, depend on extending existing bilateral military confidence building measures like a network and further developing initial approaches for multilateral military cooperation (e.g. in the case of rescue operations on the high sea) within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum. In the future, North Korea's forces will then have to be integrated into these network-like structures for military confidence building. Russian and Chinese forces can begin pilot initiatives for this.¹²⁴

In contrast US forces are to be included in military confidence building and arms control measures from the outset, because of their presence in South Korea. In addition, they have made unilateral efforts by withdrawing their tactical nuclear weapons and canceling "team spirit" joint military manoeuvres. These efforts will be reinforced by the transfer of part of the USFK to the south over the next few years within the framework of the Land Partnership Plan. To leave them aside would create an almost insurmountable obstacle to continuing with the policy of military détente on the peninsula. Neither the Basic Agreement nor the American government's new "comprehensive approach", however, make provisions for the participation of the USFK in confidence building measures and arms control on the Korean peninsula. This is connected with the fact that

123 Author information from a discussion with a representative of the Chinese Embassy in Berlin on 9 March 2001.

124 They can invite to CSBMs, which officers of the North Korean forces will also attend.

the North Korean government has to date expressed its official disapproval of the American presence in Korea.

The USA is also safeguarding its legal position vis-à-vis its South Korean ally. If American units are to be included in confidence building and arms control measures, then they want to have a say in them. However, there are as of yet no joint US-ROK arms control policy programme or arms control coordinating committee – similar to some extent to the High Level Task Force (HLTF) in Europe. This attitude fits in well with the forces in South Korea, which would like to obstruct the withdrawal of all US troops and therefore exclude them from arms control negotiations.¹²⁵

Since the main threat emanates from the United States as far as North Koreans are concerned, the conditions for including the USFK remain quite high, because the political voting procedures for a coherent North Korea policy have not yet been decided and therefore the bilateral arms control voting procedures between South Korea and the USA are still not evident. Pyongyang is faced with the question of whether it should now let itself in for a conventional arms control process, the criteria for and costs of which it is not fully aware of, and which is marked, if not ultimately decided by the conservative forces in the USA. It is hardly to be expected that Kim Jong-il will allow himself to be drawn into this.

If, conversely, the USA and South Korea wanted to make it clear that they are serious about military détente, it would be vital to create the necessary coordinating bodies. They could then discuss in advance the principles, norms, rules and procedures of possible talks on the basis of the Basic Agreement. This would give Pyongyang the politically important indication that no one intends to exclude the US forces in Korea from this process. The détente-friendly South Koreans, however, are confronted with the problem that they are supposed to get involved in a situation in which there is disagreement on fundamental political issues with the US government and where the American arms control agency is run by an ultra-conservative hard-liner (Bolton), but they should nonetheless enter into conceptional arms control talks and form an associated coordinating body. South Korea also requires clarification in this instance, in order to make things more predictable. The joint study by American and South Korean experts on military confidence building and arms control measures could form an initial basis for this.

Arms control negotiations between North and South Korea would be problematic and very tedious. The differences in quality of the military equipment are even more serious than at the end of the 1980s in Europe and this disparity will increase. A purely quantitative approach to constraints, aiming for equality, would definitely be to the military disadvantage of the DPRK and hardly compatible with the principle of equal security. The military leadership of the North will therefore insist on a symmetrical approach to

¹²⁵ This point of view appears to be widely prevalent among South Korean security and defence experts. There are fears that the USA could use arms control negotiations as a pretext for unilateral withdrawal of troops. The experiences with the European MBFR negotiations in the 1970s speak against this however. They successfully served to ward off such unilateral steps by European countries and thwarted US Congress representative Mansfield's unilateral troop reduction initiatives.

reduction for understandable reasons, and in the process can refer to the principle of reciprocity emphasized in Seoul and Washington by the conservative hard-liners.¹²⁶ People have probably forgotten that in the CFE Treaty mandate negotiations it was partly a question of ignoring this principle so as to obstruct the symmetrical approach to reduction. The North Korean military is strengthened by such a method of procedure, because the USA wants its sea forces to be passed over for restrictions, although it is precisely they that might strongly influence the security of the peninsula and are far superior to the North Korean coastal defense forces. The South Korean navy also wants to go beyond its own coastal defense duties in future, as not to leave Japan a clear playing field in this area, and so that they can present themselves to Washington as an important regional ally. Like the USA, for this reason they will have no great interest in restrictions to the sea forces. The question is whether confidence building measures are at least possible over the marine infantry that occupy foreign territory. As an example, larger exercises by such units in excess of the size of a brigade could be announced in advance and put under the control of mutual observation and later restricted.

Besides this, Pyongyang will primarily demand the withdrawal of US combat aircraft with offensive potential, which since the experiences of the second Gulf War, the Kosovo War and the Afghan War, represent the greatest threat to North Korea. It would be cheaper for the US forces, however, to reduce their cost-intensive ground forces.¹²⁷ They are saving themselves and South Korea high transfer costs from Seoul and other bases and can therefore at the same time cut down the growing criticism of their troops among the South Korean people. The North Korean military politicians will also endeavour to hand over their military advantages, for example in artillery, as late as possible and may link this with demands for economic aid as in previous arms control negotiations.

In the end, the objectives of any possible steps to disarm are decisively influenced by whether they are based on a confederation or the reunification of the North and the South. Arms control negotiations will only then get a chance if they are based on the confederated approach. Anything else will be rejected by Pyongyang, because it casts doubt on its independence. In the case of a confederation, sizeable cuts in capacities are scarcely to be expected, as it will only be possible to break down the considerable mistrust between both countries bit by bit. Reductions may be made first to stabilize the military situation, such as getting rid of Seoul's role as hostage and in order to reduce the danger of a surprise attack from either side or full-scale offensive.

In the course of a rapprochement and in terms of arms control policy, however, it is not out of the question that the Stalinist ruling ideology of the North Korean leadership – divested of its military cloud cover – would rapidly collapse. If reunification were then to happen, a radical reduction of military forces would be just around the corner due to costs. Arms control would be largely invalidated once the transition phase had been

126 General Schwartz said as much in his statement to the US Congress, *loc cit.* (Footnote 12), pp. 28f.

127 See also Michael O'Hanlon, *US Military Force Structure After Korean Reunification*, in: *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Autumn 2001, p. 213.

completed. For political and financial reasons, large-scale disbanding of North Korean forces would be almost certain and South Korea would no longer need to maintain so many troops and weapons. Cuts of more than 50% would be possible without further ado. The North Korean leadership is aware of this risk and will probably only get involved with structural arms control and disarmament if they think that they are in control of the process. This presupposes a new and stronger identity from civilian economic modernization, which currently does not exist.

These scenarios are influenced by future security policy developments in the surrounding region. For example, if the conflict between China and Taiwan over the One-China policy were to get worse, or the political situation in China become destabilized, or Japan and China develop into super-powers, or a new conflict break out between China and Russia over Siberia and the Russian Far East, these would all have an impact on the objectives of arms control. In such cases, disarmament measures would end up being weaker or not be taken at all. Conversely, since the last decade there has been a clear increase in military cooperation and confidence building in the region, even if it has been on a bilateral or trilateral basis. Multilateral institutions in the shape of the ASEAN Regional Forum and the NEACD are ready to take over this role.¹²⁸ The first confidence building programmes have already been agreed upon. Multilateral measures – similar to the CSCE agreements such as in the Stockholm Document of 1986 – are not yet considered likely for the time being. Nonetheless an increasingly dense network of bilateral military confidence building and cooperation may encourage forces in the region to become oriented towards defence and make concrete steps to ease disarmament between North and South Korea.

The number of problems to do with structural arms control negotiations makes it clear that talks on the subject are unlikely to take place very soon. There are simply too many prerequisites to be met, and they are hardly likely to be met under the present security policy conditions. After the first bilateral meeting of both defence ministers in September 2000, the South Korean approach to military confidence building on the other hand offers significantly greater chances of setting up a permanent security policy dialogue before too much longer. North Korean diplomats have begun to find out in the last year, bilaterally and in more detail, about experiences with military confidence building in Europe to date and would like to continue this process.¹²⁹

The initial measures for military confidence building contained in the Basic Agreement (see pages 22f.) have several advantages: they do not cast doubt on

- the North Korean ruling system,
- or its military strategy,

128 For more detail see Bonnie D. Jenkins, *Prospects for a Conventional Arms Control Treaty and Confidence Building Measures in North East Asia*, INSS Occasional Paper 34, USAF Institute for National Security Studies, MSAF Academy, Colorado, August 2000, p. 32.

129 See also Anne Schnepfen, *Vergebene Chancen – In Korea erschöpft sich die Aussöhnungspolitik in Gesten und Symbolen*, in: FAZ, 31 October 2001, p. 14.

- or its military capabilities.

Furthermore, the principle of reciprocity emphasized by conservative forces in the USA and South Korea is easier to uphold. An important limitation applies to this assertion, however. Military confidence building is not possible without transparency, and this touches in principle on the issue of systems. The requirement for an effective verification as defined by conservative forces in South Korea and the USA feeds the fear of the system of hard-liners on the North Korean side. At the end of the day, all North Korean soldiers are currently under orders to kill themselves rather than fall into the hands of western forces. In order to begin the process of military confidence building, it will be necessary to take these fears into consideration in an appropriate way, especially in the initial stage.

Sufficient opportunity should be given to the military forces to test initially military transparency on a voluntary basis, so as to be able to assess its limited effect better. An agreement on mutual military confidence building measures on a voluntary basis allows North Korea to determine by itself how, when, where and how much to act, and they remain masters of their destiny at all times. In this way, they can gain confidence in this tool gradually. This is an important prerequisite in order to make the transition later on to regular and binding CSBMs. As an interim solution, a small number of measures could be agreed to per year, but leaving the time, place and extent open. Joint monitoring of the measures should be possible at certain intervals. Using the Basic Agreement as a basis, there is a whole series of activities that would satisfy the above criteria. This also takes bilateral agreements into account that are generally found at the beginning of military confidence building.

- Measures to prevent an inadvertent military confrontation and agreement of rules and procedures in the event of one breaking out
- Setting up of an “operational” hot line between the defence ministries or the Chiefs of General Staff¹³⁰
- Agreement of cooperative military measures in the event of cross-border damage from natural disasters or military accidents
- Joint exercises, to prevent or remedy such damage together
- Exchange visits of naval vessels
- Regulations for setting up new border crossing points for road and rail routes including removal of mines and other military obstacles
- Regulations for joint peaceful use of the Demilitarized Zone
- Organisation and holding of sports competitions between military units
- Construction of mutual military communication and liaison offices in the capital cities

130 As such a hot line already exists between the North and South Korean forces, but it is simply switched off for most of the time by the North Korean generals. Author's information from a discussion with a South Korean military expert.

- Invitation of civil security experts and officers to security policy seminars and conferences held by the other side
- Exchange of annual calendars for military exercises by divisions, corps or larger
- Invitation of observers to military activities by divisions, corps or larger

The historic experiences with voluntary measures for military confidence building in Europe between 1975 and 1985 show that they were used only very selectively and not very frequently. If relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact were relaxed, there were more activities, but if tensions were strained, they ceased almost completely. Nonetheless, forces were successfully introduced to and gained confidence in the tool and how it worked. Only when the then Soviet General Secretary introduced a fundamental change in Soviet foreign policy with the concepts of glasnost and perestroika, did regular and binding CSBMs become possible. These experiences raise the question of under which internal political conditions North Korea would be prepared to make such concessions, especially as the freedom of movement there is estimably lower when compared with the situation at that time in the Warsaw Pact countries.¹³¹

Decisive importance can be attached to the problem of how the USA and American forces can be involved in such talks. As long as the North Korean government does not accept the presence of American troops in South Korea, there will be no change in the US government's present attitude. The North Korean military's interest in finding out more about the USFK may grow after the increased possible military options against Iraq, North Korea and Iran were considered in the Pentagon and conservative security policy circles in the wake of the attacks of 11 September. Also, Bush's State of the Union Address of 29 January 2002 enforced a change in paradigms in the fight against international terrorism, which brought WMD activities and missile development in these countries to the forefront of American security policy. Even among South Korean security experts, there has currently been a debate over whether and to what extent US forces could take military action against North Korea by themselves. If North Korea were to demand that the USA be included in such talks and in so doing accept the presence of USFK representatives, this would be tantamount to accepting their presence. Conversely, the full inclusion of US forces in negotiations on military confidence building on the Korean peninsula would significantly raise the fences for possible military attacks against North Korean military installations. Furthermore, North Korea can allay fears in South Korea by accepting US forces on the peninsula and in so doing remove a major obstacle to a future peace settlement. The presence of American troops is also advantageous to the DPRK on a regional scale. It limits the power of China and Russia in the region and prevents a great display of power from Japan.

131 For example North Korean radios and televisions are usually not technically set up to receive foreign broadcasts and contact with foreigners is forbidden. Prior authorization is necessary for travel to other parts of North Korea. Cycling is forbidden in Pyongyang because it increases by too much the amount of individual mobility that cannot be monitored.

4. Overcoming the barriers to dialogue

Since George W. Bush took over power in the White House, fate has not smiled on Kim Dae-jung's policy of reconciliation and détente which is supported by the EU, China, Russia and many other countries around the world. Bush had hardly taken office when the Clinton administration's almost completed negotiations, providing for a freeze on testing and exporting long-range North Korean missiles, were simply shelved, due to an apparent lack of effective verification measures, and at the same time missiles with a longer range were permitted to the South Korean forces, although there was, as yet, no new political approach. Bush then publicly expressed his scepticism about the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in the presence of Kim Dae-jung in March 2001. Furthermore, the new "comprehensive approach" of June 2001 substantially raised the costs of cooperating for North Korea, while the corresponding compensation has remained largely obscure. The attack of 11 September was used for more military pressure, by unnecessarily putting the forces in Korea onto a higher state of emergency alert. Although Kim Jong-il extended the moratorium on missile testing until 2003, at the beginning of May 2001 and has taken small steps closer to the USA and South Korea since November 2001, and although South Korea requested a face-saving gesture from the USA at the highest level in the light of these positive signals, the response at the highest level was to categorize North Korea in the "axis of evil".

The US president's State of the Union Address and the results of his latest visit to South Korea have once again made it clear that there is still no consensus within the American government, or between it and the South Korean president, on the future structure of North Korean policy. Admittedly, they have finally reached an agreement on initial topics for dialogue, but there continues to be disagreement over the details. All the same, a bilateral working group has been set up with the task of overcoming the differences and developing a joint programme. For political reasons, however, it is doubtful whether this group will reach a conclusion before the South Korean presidential elections on 18 December 2002. In the US government, the forces in favour of confrontation seem for the most part to be playing for time and hoping that the conservative opposition leader, Lee Hoi-chang, one of the candidates with the highest prospects, will win the South Korean presidential elections. As he is much closer to the views of the Bush government, it would be easier to reach agreement with him over the content of the proposal to engage in dialogue.

On the other hand, those who support dialogue in the USA have managed, in cooperation with the Japanese and South Korean government, to persuade Bush to produce a relatively credible proposal of dialogue at the highest level. The credibility of the proposal is supported by having been repeated in Beijing, by the demand for conventional arms control having been temporarily dropped, by willingness to continue with humanitarian aid, and by the assurance that there are no plans for a military invasion of North Korea. The supporters of dialogue in the USA are placing their hopes on the election of the South Korean presidential candidate Roh Moo-hyun of the Millennium

Democratic Party who until now has had excellent prospects, and who would be likely to continue Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy.

The political significance of US President Bush's criticism of the system and his renewed expression of scepticism about Kim Jong-il remains open. On the one hand, this may simply work to win him extra time until a joint approach and its details has been agreed upon with South Korea and in the USA itself. Besides this, his criticism limits the South Korean president's room for manoeuvre in terms of foreign policy for the remainder of his term of office. Despite this, it offers the forces in the USA more interested in confrontation a welcome tool with which to continue to disrupt dialogue or even prevent it altogether by making excessive demands.

In this way, Bush commissioned the development of a comprehensive programme for non-proliferation that would give the conservative unilateralists new tools in the shape of its military counter-proliferation components with which to torpedo the South Korean process of détente as necessary. A concrete example of this is the latest publications of the new secret American Nuclear Posture Review, in which the development of miniature nuclear weapons is propagated for use against targets in deep bunkers, which might also be used against countries which do not possess any nuclear weapons.¹³² This casts doubt on North Korea and others upon the assurances of former US presidents (for example in connection with the Geneva Framework Agreement) that they would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries. This led to an immediate and forceful protest from Pyongyang, for whom refusal to comply with the Geneva Framework Agreement became no longer out of the question.¹³³ On the other hand, the White House had for the first time not certified the Geneva Framework Agreement for the US Congress, in order to increase the pressure on the DPRK to start the several years of necessary IAEA inspections.¹³⁴ Additional American food aid for North Korea is also in future to be made contingent upon more transparency about how it is distributed and used.¹³⁵ The preventive doctrine against international terrorism announced by US President Bush on 1 June 2002 provoked further concerns in Pyongyang.¹³⁶ Deliberately the military hardliners in Pyongyang blocked the first visit of a high ranking US envoy (James Kelly) in North

132 Cf. Barry Schweid, U.S. shift on nuclear weapons criticized, in: *The Boston Globe*, 10 March 2002, p. A25, in: www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/069/nation/US_shift_on_nuclear_weapons_criticized+.shtml.

133 A spokesman from the North Korean Foreign Ministry made the following comment on 13 March 2002, "In case the U.S. plan for a nuclear attack on the DPRK turns out to be true, the DPRK will have no option but to take a substantial countermeasure against it, not bound to any DPRK-U.S. agreement." Cited from, U.S. new plan for nuclear attack under fire, in: *KCNA*, 14 March 2002, in: www.kcna.co.jp/contents/20020314.htm.

134 Cf. White House Report: North Korea, Tribunals, Finland, Nominations, in: *Washington File*, 20 March 2002.

135 See U.S. Department of State (Ed.), *USAID Announces More Food Aid For North Korea*, *Washington File* 07 June 2002.

136 See U.S. State Department (Ed.), *Bush Says War on Terror "Will Not Be Won on the Defensive*, *Washington File* 01. June 2002, in: <http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/02060201.htm> and one of the North Korean reactions: *KCNA assails U.S. "National Security Strategy"*, in: <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2002/200206/20020622.htm>.

Korea because of the naval skirmish in the West Sea on 29 June 2002.¹³⁷ It is therefore quite possible that the situation will worsen into a crisis in the coming year.

Since North Korea will have to reckon with much higher cooperation costs under this US administration, it is not out of the question that Kim Jong-il is counting on a political change in the next US presidential elections at the end of 2004 before he is prepared to enter into a permanent dialogue with the United States, even if important decisions arise during 2003. At the very least, he will wait and see whether the Bush administration urges Iraq to resume UN inspections, and how it does this, and whether the conservative forces are able to expand their power in the mid-term elections. After all, the hesitations over the construction of the two light-water reactors for North Korea within the framework of KEDO must be settled and closely connected with a decision made over the future of the North Korean missile testing moratorium. A weakened hard-liner faction in Washington would be willing to make greater concessions in the event that Pyongyang were to accept a comprehensive, obligatory inspection schedule for its nuclear installations lasting several years. The prolongation of the moratorium on missile testing might then also be in the interests of the DPRK, in order to make further inroads into the power of the hard-liners in Washington.

At the bilateral summit with US President Bush in Seoul, Kim Dae-jung managed to involve the conservative unilateralists in the dialogue for the first time, by agreeing to a joint list of topics, even though it would seem unlikely for the reasons given above that there will be agreement on the content of the topics during the rest of his term in office. The North Korean government may, however, exercise considerable influence on the future of the inter-Korean policy of détente, even under a new South Korean president, through additional measures with regard to the policy of détente on the Korean peninsula, such as speedy arrangement of family reunions, greater economic openness, beginning of construction on the cross-border road and railway lines, and a second inter-Korean summit. In this way it would strengthen the forces there willing to enter into dialogue.¹³⁸ In spite of being close to the Bush approach, Lee Hoi-chang supports dialogue. The question is how large the political leeway is for this in North Korea itself. Economic openness towards South Korea also entails greater political dependency, which they have so far tried to avoid by diversifying internationally.

In the present situation it is important that the EU, China and Russia encourage the DPRK to exercise military restraint in spite of provocations by American hard-liners. At the same time, it will be necessary to gently make it clear to the North Korean government that a return to the Clinton administration's approach to foreign policy is a pipe-dream.

137 See Nicholas Kralev, U.S. drops plan for Talks with Pyongyang, in: The Washington Times 03 July 2002, in: <http://www.washtimes.com/world/20020703-89210938.htm>.

138 In the mean time there have been initial indications that Pyongyang is ready to resume dialogue with Japan and South Korea. Cf. Seo Hyun-jin, South, North Korea seeking to restart peace process, in: The Korean Herald, 26 March 2002, in: http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/htmls_dir2002/03/26/200203260060.asp and Analysis: U.S. cold shoulder turns N. Korea to Tokyo, in: The Asahi Shimbun of 25.03.2002, in: <http://www.asahi.com/english/international/K2002032500234.html>.

They must prepare themselves for higher costs of cooperating. In parallel to this the EU, Japan, China and Russia must try to carry on strengthening the position of economic reformers in North Korea by means of well-directed aid to the economy and infrastructure and the promise of additional aid if North Korea opens itself to dialogue with the USA once more. Only with the dialogue process will the chances be increased of further limiting the scope for action of the conservative unilateralists in the US government by means of mutual give and take.

In any event, the United States would depend on the support of China, Russia, Japan and South Korea for a credible policy of military aggression against the DPRK. Russia and China in particular would have to call their military mutual assistance commitments into question. As long as Pyongyang refrains, however, from taking any new steps in military provocation (missile testing, nuclear testing, export of long-range missiles), or resorting to them at best in discussions with Moscow and Beijing, they will hardly support the USA in this. The last terrorist action supported by the North Korean government was over 14 years ago and North Korea's announcement that it would enter into all UN anti-terrorism conventions would be a step in the right direction. Pyongyang should be taken at its word on this. The USA would query the participation of Moscow and Beijing in the global anti-terrorism coalition, if they were to take military action against Pyongyang without justifiable cause.

The prospects for talks on military confidence building and arms control on the Korean peninsula are slim, without a permanent and politically stable dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang. If this is not possible in the next one or two years, it will be important to intensify preparations for talks, by consolidating existing contacts for information and training on issues of military confidence building between Germany and both Korean states. North Korean military personnel especially should play a larger part in this kind of informal talks and seminars, in order to familiarize themselves with the tools of arms control. This would gradually push the confidence building process along and improve the prerequisites for arms control negotiations under more favourable political background conditions.

If the North does not accept the presence of US forces in South Korea in some form, it is hardly likely that there will be any far-reaching change in security policy relations. This presupposes a different character of democratic American foreign policy, however, for which many in the US government are currently unprepared. It is not only a matter of distinguishing between the political leadership and the people in North Korea, but of developing a sensitivity for the fact that in the North Korean government a fierce battle is being waged over the future shape of the country. The supporters of economic modernization have hardly any chance if a military super-power which supposedly stands for upholding democratic values on the world-wide stage cannot think of anything better than an overbearingly simplistic and uncompromisingly tough policy of confrontation.

5. Glossary

ACR	Arms Control Reporter
APEC	Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATACM	Army Tactical Missile
CFE	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSBM	Confidence and Security Building Measures
DMZ	Demilitarised Zone
DPRK	Democratic People's Republik of Korea, or North Korea
EU	European Union
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
HLTF	High Level Task Force
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies (London)
KCNA	Korean Central News Agency
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
MBFR	Mutual Balanced Force Reductions
MD	Military District (Russian)
MD	Missile Defense
MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket System
MR	Military Region (Chinese)
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEACD	North East Asia Cooperation Dialogue
NMD	(US) National Missile Defense
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAC	Patriot Advanced Capability
PACAF	(US) Pacific Air Force
ROK	Republic of Korea, or South Korea
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
TLAM-N	Tomahawk Land Attack Missile Nuclear
TCOG	Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group
TSR	Transsiberian Railway
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USFJ	United States Forces Japan
USFK	United States Forces Korea
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USPACOM	United States Pacific Command
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction